

Arab League chief arrives

AMMAN (J.T.) — Arab League Secretary-General Esmat Abdul Meguid arrived here late Sunday on a visit aimed at talks with the Jordanian leadership on pan-Arab affairs and issues of concern to the Cairo-based pan-Arab body and the Kingdom. It is the second visit of Mr. Abdul Meguid to Jordan after assuming office as head of the 22-member organisation. He is expected to be received by His Majesty King Hussein and Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti. Among topics for discussion are ways and means to end inter-Arab differences and strengthen Arab solidarity and to give a new impetus to the Middle East peace process. Mr. Abdul Meguid is also expected to review the financial status of the Arab League. Jordan has fully paid its dues to the organisation, but several other members have not met their commitments, according to Arab diplomats.

Jordan Times

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جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية مستقلة عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية "الراي"

UAE leader urges Arab reconciliation

ABU DHABI (AFP) — The president of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) urged Arab states on Sunday to patch up their differences and join hands to face what he called the challenges besetting them. Sheikh Zayed Ben Sultan Al Nahayan, quoted by the official news agency WAM, said there was a need for a "comprehensive review of the Arab situation." "We should realise the challenges facing the Arab World and the need to confront them collectively because this is the only way to restore Arab solidarity," he told Gulf Arab health ministers meeting in Abu Dhabi. "What are we expecting from the state of division and disintegration from which the Arab Nation is suffering... The only solution to find a way out of this deteriorating situation is to achieve solidarity." It was the latest call by Sheikh Zayed for ending inter-Arab rifts, which have deepened following the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

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Secret Netanyahu-Arafat talks fail to produce deal

Israeli premier maintains peace process will see 'surprises'

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Yasser Arafat met secretly in the early hours Sunday and progress was reported toward a plan to withdraw most Israeli troops from Hebron, Israeli and Palestinian officials said. Mr. Netanyahu himself said Sunday he expected "surprises" on the peace process.

At the urging of U.S. mediator Dennis Ross, the two leaders met in a post-midnight session at the Erez crossing linking Israel and the autonomous Gaza Strip. They talked for four and one-half hours until dawn, officials close to the negotiations said.

"The meeting took place and progress was made," said David Bar Ilan, a top adviser to Mr. Netanyahu. There were expectations that an agreement could be wrapped up in 24 to 48 hours, but Israeli officials were cautious, noting that there had been many reports of pending agreement in the past three months.

The key issue, apparently still unresolved despite a new U.S. formula, was the Palestinian demand for a timetable for three further Israeli withdrawals from rural areas of the West

Bank after the Hebron pull-back.

One Israeli source who demanded anonymity said Israel was willing to commit to a date on the first withdrawal, expected to take place in the town of Halhoul near Hebron six weeks after the pullback.

However, Mr. Netanyahu has opposed giving specific dates for the second and third stages, which were to be completed by the end of 1997 under the original Israel-Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) accord. Israel now wants to restart the clock and have the agreements in six-month phases ending in mid-1998. The Israeli source said Mr. Netanyahu would fail to win approval from his cabinet if he set earlier dates.

A second Israeli source, however, said progress had been made on the issue of reopening Martyrs' Street, which had been closed by Israel to protect settlers. Israeli officials blamed Egypt for urging Mr. Arafat to dig in his heels on the issue of a timetable and on the Palestinian demand for stationing a Palestinian guard at the Ibrahim Mosque.

Each side blamed the other for the continuing impasse.

Meanwhile, Mr. Netanyahu said "we expect surprises in the peace process soon."

"I met last night with Yasser Arafat at the Erez crossing. We achieved a certain progress but there are still points of division," he told a Tel Aviv audience.

The right-wing leader said the meeting helped build trust between the sides. "I hoped it would have remained secret because it is important to hold such meetings in order to build confidence and business-like relations."

Nabil Shaath, a leading minister in Arafat's self-rule government, said progress was made during the surprise meeting. "Some positive things were reached, but we still have a major problem of the whole schedule of withdrawals after Hebron," he said in an interview on Israel Radio. "It was an important meeting."

Shai Bazak, spokesman for Mr. Netanyahu, said the Palestinians had made new demands which had been relayed by Mr. Ross. "The Palestinians in this instance raised new demands after the negotiations were about to reach completion," Mr. Bazak said, speaking on Israel

Radio. "It was an important meeting." Shai Bazak, spokesman for Mr. Netanyahu, said the Palestinians had made new demands which had been relayed by Mr. Ross. "The Palestinians in this instance raised new demands after the negotiations were about to reach completion," Mr. Bazak said, speaking on Israel

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Israel to approve Ras Al Amud plan 'any day'

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Israeli authorities will grant final approval within days for construction of more than 100 Jewish homes in the heart of Arab East Jerusalem, the Israeli mayor, Ehud Olmert, said Sunday.

"It will be signed in a matter of days," Mr. Olmert said of the plan to build 132 homes for Jews in East Jerusalem's Ras Al Amud neighbourhood.

Palestinian leaders have warned of violent protests if Israel goes ahead with the Ras Al Amud housing plan, the first time Jewish homes have been slated for construction in the middle of an existing Arab neighbourhood in the eastern sector of the Holy City.

But Mr. Olmert brushed aside their complaints, say-

ing that the plan was a matter of days. "It will be signed in a matter of days," Mr. Olmert said of the plan to build 132 homes for Jews in East Jerusalem's Ras Al Amud neighbourhood.

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DEMAND FOR HOSTAGE RELEASE: A Peruvian child joins a march demanding the release of 74 hostages from the residence of the Japanese ambassador in Lima. Peruvian guerrillas stormed the residence on Dec. 17 during a reception and took several hundred people hostage. Since then they have released most, but continue to hold 74. There was no significant development on Sunday in the stand-off between the government and the rebels (AFP photo)

Jordan reaffirms support for Palestinian rights and warns violence could wreck peace process

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan on Sunday called for increased commitment to achieving just, comprehensive and durable peace in the Middle East and warned that violence would endanger the entire Arab-Israeli peace process. The Crown Prince, who was speaking in an interview with Radio Israel, also reaffirmed Jordan's total support for the Palestinian people's rights, including the right to self-determination.

Speaking against the backdrop of serious diffi-

culties encountered in the implementation of agreements reached between Israel and the Palestinians, the Crown Prince said that "at this critical stage, we should be more committed to achieving a just and comprehensive peace" in the Middle East.

"The latest acts of violence and the escalation of unrest in the region might affect the whole peace process," said the Crown Prince in an implicit reference to a shooting attack by an Israeli soldier against unarmed Palestinians in the West Bank town of Hebron

and the bombing of a bus in central Damascus last week.

At least six Palestinians were wounded in the Hebron attack while the Damascus bombing claimed 13 lives.

The Crown Prince, in the interview with Radio Israel, stressed that the Arab and Islamic identities had to be protected and defended so as to secure a better life for future generations.

The Crown Prince said Jordan had played and continues to play a significant role on the regional and international levels. He

referred to the Kingdom's participation in the Washington summit late last year that produced an Israeli-Palestinian agreement to resume stalled negotiations.

The Crown Prince noted that the summit was called after Israeli-Palestinian violence broke out as a result of an Israeli decision to reopen an entrance to a tunnel that runs near Islamic shrines in Jerusalem.

His Majesty King Hussein played a significant role at the Washington summit in convincing Israeli

(Continued on page 7)

Arabs vow war on terrorism

TUNIS (AFP) — Interior ministers from the 22-member Arab League vowed Sunday to battle terrorism together as they wound up their 14th annual conference here Sunday.

The ministers issued an official statement at the end of the two-day meeting, promising a "common strategy to fight" terrorism, and to set up "a solid base of efficient cooperation" between Arab states to battle the purveyors of violence.

The agreement aims to increase cooperation between Arab states in the fight against terrorism, in particular violence linked to Islamic militancy which effects several Arab countries to a lesser or greater extent.

Most Arab countries were represented by ministers at this meeting, which covered some 15 agenda items of international interest including inter-Arab cooperation programmes on the fight against organised crime and drug-trafficking.

The secretary general of the Council of Arab Interior Ministers said some 60,000 people were killed in the last five years in terrorist-related attacks in the Arab World, the overwhelming majority of them in Algeria. "The majority were simply Arab citizens who were victims" of these attacks which also caused damage estimated at billions of dollars, Ahmad Salem said in a report submitted to the council.

He said according to Western estimates, clashes between extremists and security forces in Algeria, as well as attacks blamed on the extremists, have left at least 50,000 dead in the last five years.

Kabariti urges consensus on changes to election law

Everything could be revised except one-person, one-vote principle, premier tells public debate

By Maria Bizri

Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The government on Sunday reiterated that any new election law must retain the "one-person, one-vote" formula and called upon all political parties, including the opposition, to arrive at a consensus on a new legislation.

Addressing political party members, deputies and other officials at a workshop entitled "Civic Society and the Elections Law" held at the Royal Cultural Centre, Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti also stressed that his "government believes that the only principle which should be retained in any new election law is that of the one-person, one-

vote." This principle was stated by Mr. Kabariti as the basis of any democratic parliamentary system throughout the world.

Mr. Kabariti told the meeting: "With a new elections law we aim to promote democracy benefiting from the previous experiences and we intend to entrust a judicial committee with supervising the elections and guaranteeing government's neutrality."

"Because a draft election law is a national project, it should involve all public sectors, political groups, professional unions, popular organisations and other national groups," he said, adding that "the government has already started contacts with these organi-

sations in order to arrive at a common denominator that would serve as a broad basis for the new law."

"But, to be honest, the government does not feel it can yet submit a draft law that enjoys the minimum level of approval by various sectors," the prime minister said.

The government, he stressed, "feels that the method used in applying/implementing the present law is open to a number of questions that justify the calls for its revision, especially with regard to electoral constituencies and the method used in granting quotas for minorities."

Mr. Kabariti stressed that

(Continued on page 7)

Algerian extremists slaughter 16

ALGIERS (AFP) — Sixteen people, mostly women and children, were murdered overnight in the village of Benachour about 50 kilometres south of the capital by armed extremists, the security services said Sunday.

The attack came one month to the day after a massacre at Benachour in which 19 civilians — including women, children and elderly people — were butchered by extremists.

Following that attack hundreds fled the village, which is located just outside Algeria's main garrison town, Bida. The remaining citizens formed a self-defence unit which clashed with the militants as they raided the town.

But the extremists man-

aged to get into several houses situated a short distance away from the village, to slaughter their prey. Some 10 militants were also killed in the incident, witnesses said, but the toll could not be officially confirmed.

Leaflets threatening further bloodshed had been circulating during the past few days in the region, where the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) is well implanted.

A brief statement from the authorities said the victims of this first civilian slaughter of 1997 in Algeria had been "murdered by cowards."

The number of killings attributed to fundamentalist movements has risen recently in the run-up to

Ramadan, which is due to start this week.

More than 200 have died in the past two months, often in attacks of atrocious savagery. However, the toll may well be considerably higher since not all massacres are made public or are reported by the press.

On Saturday, Prime Minister Ahmad Ouyahia appealed for vigilance in the face of Islamic "terrorism," which he claimed had been defeated after five years of undeclared civil war in the country.

He classified recent fundamentalist attacks as "desperate acts." "The more the criminals are incapable of attacking secure localities and infrastructures, the

(Continued on page 7)

Bahrain, Qatar to meet in S. Arabia

DOHA (R) — The foreign ministers of Bahrain and Qatar, their countries embroiled in a border dispute, are expected to meet in Riyadh on Tuesday to discuss ways to improve ties, Gulf diplomats said on Sunday.

The meeting will be held under the auspices of a committee formed by the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) summit in Doha in December to try to solve the border row, they added. The four-country team is headed by Saudi Arabia and includes the remaining GCC members — Kuwait, Oman and the United Arab Emirates.

"The upcoming meeting will try to clear the atmosphere of misunderstanding and mistrust between the two neighbours and pave the way for normal relations between them," said one Gulf diplomat.

"It will bring the foreign ministers of the two states face to face and encourage dialogue between them, but it will not seek to draft a formula to resolve the border row," he added.

The committee was scheduled to hold its first meeting in Cairo late last month on the sidelines of a conference of the eight

Syria demanded U.S. explanation why no condemnation of bombing

DAMASCUS (AFP) — Syria asked the State Department for an explanation after the United States failed to issue an immediate condemnation of last week's bombing of a bus in Damascus, a Syrian official said Sunday.

The official, who requested anonymity, said the Syrian embassy in Washington was asked to seek clarifications after State Department spokesman Nicolas Burns failed to condemn the bombing in his initial reaction to the attack.

A Syrian spokesman expressed surprise at the

King calls Assad, condemns attack

HIS MAJESTY King Hussein on Sunday made a telephone call to Syrian President Hafez Al Assad and denounced last week's bombing of a bus in Damascus which caused the death and injury of tens of innocent people.

King Hussein also extended condolences to the bereaved families. Lower House of Parliament Speaker Sa'd Hayel Srour sent a cable to the Syrian People's Council speaker, Abdul Qader Qaddoura, condoling him over the deaths in the Damascus bombing.

time that the U.S. reaction did not include "a single condemnation of this terrorist action" or "expression of solidarity with the victims' families." The Syrian official said

(Continued on page 7)

ROYAL JORDANIAN

ROYAL JORDANIAN has the pleasure to announce a new check - in procedure, for First and Super Business Class passengers as of January 1st 1997. Complete departure formalities will be done at Terminal 1 on behalf of First and Business Class passengers, while they are relaxing at the CIP Lounge.

U.N. experts to search for banned missile parts in Iraq

BAGHDAD (AFP) — U.N. weapons experts will search for more parts belonging to banned long-range missiles during a fresh mission to Iraq this week, U.N. officials said Sunday.

"They will arrive tomorrow (Monday) and will conduct a visit to look for missile remains," Goren Wallen, head of the U.N. Special Commission's (UNSCOM) office of monitoring and verification in Baghdad, told AFP.

The Iraqi authorities agreed to the mission — aimed at determining how many long-range missiles are left in Iraq's arsenal — during a visit last month here by UNSCOM Chairman Rolf Ekeus.

General Amer Hammudi Saadi, an advisor to President Saddam Hussein, confirmed a new team of experts would arrive "to pursue the work on the number of missile engines."

"We are convinced the results of their work and joint studies (on the missiles) will clear up doubts

on Iraq's possession of prohibited weapons," Gen. Saadi told the official Al Jumhuriyah newspaper.

"During our last talks with Ekeus, we got a clear idea about the basis on which the suspicions were founded," he said. "This will allow us to work scientifically to show that the suspicions are unfounded, and to bring concrete evidence to convince the world Iraq is right" that Baghdad has no such weapons, Gen. Saadi said.

The U.N. Security Council last month urged Iraq to stop preventing U.N. inspectors from transferring nearly 130 engines for Soviet-made Scud missiles to the United States for study.

The analysis would allow UNSCOM to deduce how many Scuds Iraq retained after determining whether the engines now stockpiled at UNSCOM offices in Baghdad were imported from Russia or made in Iraq.

UNSCOM knows how many Scuds were imported

by Baghdad from the former Soviet Union.

Iraq's Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz offered to transfer the engines to Russia, but UNSCOM rejected the proposal.

Gen. Saadi also accused the United States of "constantly pressuring the U.N. Security Council to delay a total lifting of the oil embargo" imposed on Iraq after it invaded Kuwait in August 1990.

Baghdad last month resumed limited oil exports for the first time in six years under a humanitarian deal with the United Nations aimed at raising funds to buy for badly needed food and medicine.

But under U.N. resolutions ending the 1991 Gulf war over Kuwait, Iraq must satisfy UNSCOM it has dismantled its programmes for weapons of mass destruction and long-range missiles before the full embargo can be lifted.

All missiles with a range of 150 kilometres or more are banned under the resolutions.

Russian submarine en route to Iran

DUBAI (AFP) — A Russian-made submarine bought by Iran has sailed into the Red Sea and will soon join two others in the Iranian port of Bandar Abbas, a defence official in the region said Sunday.

The submarine sailed through the Suez Canal from the Mediterranean Sea over the past two days and will take at least another week before reaching Bandar Abbas, said the defence official who asked not to be named.

Iran bought the diesel-powered, Kilo-class submarines in the last few years as part of a steady military buildup in the Gulf's vital oil shipping lanes, western military officials say.

Iran says the moves are part of its normal defence needs.

If battery problems are solved on its submarines, they could stay under water longer and pose a potential threat, a Western military source said last month.

The source also said the Iranian navy "successfully" test-fired a Chinese-made anti-ship Cruise missile from a new Chinese patrol boat during war games in the Gulf in late November.

The military source said the exercises showed Iran has "a pretty capable navy. They can't defeat the United States. But nobody has talked in terms of hurting and they probably have ways of doing that."

Iran has also boosted its ability to hit ships or aircraft in the Gulf's oil lanes by deploying three times more land-based missiles than it had two years ago, U.S. Navy officials have said.

Around 20 ships from the U.S. Fifth Fleet, including a submarine, patrol the Red Sea and the Gulf region.



UNDER WATCH: A Palestinian boy pulls a goat in front of his home as an Israeli soldier keeps watch in the centre of the West Bank town of Hebron on Sunday. Palestinian President Yasser Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met secretly early Sunday but failed to finalise an agreement on the long-delayed Israeli military redeployment in Hebron (see page 1) (AFP photo)

Rabbi held for threatening officer who halted Hebron shooting spree

HEBRON (AFP) — Police have arrested a rabbi for threatening the army officer who halted a shooting spree by an Israeli soldier in the market of Hebron last week, Israeli radio reported Sunday.

Lieutenant Avi Buskila was credited with preventing a massacre of Palestinians by wrestling soldier Noam Friedman to the ground after he had opened fire with his M-16 automatic rifle in Hebron's market on Wednesday, wounding six people.

Friedman said he attacked the Palestinians in hopes of torpedoing Israel's plan to hand most of Hebron over to Palestinian control.

The rabbi said a Jerusalem rabbi, Avraham Ariel Waldman, accosted Lt. Buskila in Hebron on

Friday, warning him not to "play hero," and saying "Rabin was also a hero, and he got shot." Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was shot and killed in November 1995 by a Jewish extremist opposed to the Palestinian peace process.

Mr. Buskila filed a complaint with police and Waldman was arrested late Saturday for allegedly issuing death threats, the radio said. The rabbi was scheduled to appear in court later Sunday, it said.

Israeli-Palestinian negotiations on carrying out the Israeli pullout from Hebron, as required under the Oslo peace accords have dragged on for three months as opposition to the withdrawal mounted among Israeli nationalists both within and outside of government.

Israeli press reports say Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu faces outright opposition to the withdrawal from at least seven of his 17 ministers and that others are wavering.

On Sunday, the brother of deputy Prime Minister and Tourism Minister Moshe Katzav, Yoel Katzav, announced that he was joining the 400 Jewish settlers who live in Hebron to signal his opposition to ceding control over the city the Palestinians.

Yoel Katzav told Israel radio he planned to live next to Hagai Ben Aritzi, Netanyahu's brother-in-law who moved to Hebron several weeks ago in a show of solidarity with the Jewish settlers.

Iran and Iraq to exchange soldiers' bodies

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran and Iraq are due to go ahead on Tuesday with a large-scale exchange of bodies of soldiers killed during their 1980-88 war, the press reported on Sunday.

The swap of the remains of 60 Iranian and 77 Iraqi soldiers will take place in Shamsheh on the southern border between the two countries, it said.

The exchanges are part of a bilateral agreement to repatriate the bodies of fallen soldiers. In the most recent operation in mid-November, the two swapped 40 Iranian soldiers and 99 Iraqi troops.

Remains of around 24,000 Iranian fighters have been found since the August 1988 ceasefire. The issue of prisoners of war and the missing in action is the main obstacle to efforts to normalise ties between Tehran and Baghdad.

Iran on Thursday made a dramatic appeal to Iraq to take steps to resolve the POW issue.

"This is a human issue which should not be politicised," the head of Iran's POW commission, general Abdollah Najafi, told a press conference. "If Iraq had a more sincere attitude, the issue could have been solved more quickly."

Late last month Iran unilaterally handed over 724 prisoners of war to Iraq in a "goodwill" gesture aimed at settling the dispute.

Iraq claims to have released all of the Iranians taken captive during the war and says Iran is holding 20,000 Iraqi prisoners.

Cypriot acquisition of Russian missiles will change military balance on island

NICOSIA (R) — The decision by Cyprus to buy surface-to-air missiles could result in a dramatic shift in the military balance on the island, already one of the most heavily militarised areas of the world, diplomats said Sunday.

The planned acquisition from Russia of the S-300 system, with a 150 kilometre range, is the first step by the Cypriot government towards building a credible air defence system.

Diplomats said the missiles would neutralise the air superiority Turkey has had here since 1974, when its troops invaded the northern third of the island in response to a short-lived coup engineered by the military then ruling Greece.

"Basically it can lock onto Turkish planes and take them out in Turkish airspace, which is a significant change over the equipment they (the Greek Cypriots) currently have," said one diplomat.

The deal for the missiles was concluded at the weekend but it was unclear when the S-300 missile air defence system would be put into place.

The agreement has raised concern in Turkey, where Turkish Defence Minister Turgut Bayraktar said the Greek Cypriot authorities were not working for peace.

"This situation will undermine peace in the region. We have warned the countries that sell arms, the U.S.A., Russia and Britain, and former U.N. Secretary General Boutros Gbali on the issue," the Anatolia agency quoted Mr. Bayraktar as saying.

"You cannot secure peace through the use of arms. We are closely following developments, and we are determined to fulfill all our obligations. We are on the side of peace. We are not the aggressors," he said.

He said Turkey's "equanimity" on the issue should not be interpreted as a sign of weakness.

Turkey's Foreign Minister Tansu Ciller expressed concern over the planned missile sale during a visit to Russia last month.

Cyprus says the weapons will be used only for defence.

"The Cyprus republic has the legitimate right to strengthen its defence capabilities so its people cease to be hostages of the Turkish occupation army," Cyprus government spokesman Yiannakis Cassoulides told Reuters.

"None of these arms purchases will be used against anyone unless (we are) attacked," he said, saying the build-up was "proportional" to Turkish armaments in the north.

United Nations' resolutions on the island have repeatedly called on both sides to cut their military spending.

"The Cyprus government has admitted to some journalists that this is a tactic to get world attention but it is a risky game to play," said one diplomat.

International efforts to reunite the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities — split by a U.N. patrolled ceasefire line since Turkey's 1974 invasion — under a federal system have gathered pace recently.

One reason is Cyprus's desire to join the European Union (EU). Accession talks are scheduled to start next year but the EU would like to see first a solution to the island's division, also a source of tension between NATO allies Turkey and Greece.

Greece and Turkey also have long been in conflict over islands in the Aegean. Athens has threatened Ankara with war if it advances further south on Cyprus.

Greece and Cyprus have a joint defence pact — as do Turkey and the Turkish Cypriot administration in the island's north — and the missiles will be deployed to protect an air and navy base under construction on the island's western coast.

The bases, part of the defence pact with Greece, should be completed this year.

The system is also expected to protect an air corridor between Cyprus and Greece, whose combat aircraft would intervene in the event of renewed hostilities on the island.

Cyprus is only a few minutes away from combat aircraft taking off from the Turkish mainland.

Accused Israeli drug smuggler caught in Miami after long chase

MIAMI (AP) — An accused Israeli drug smuggler charged with making drug runs to the Middle East with the help of a diplomat was arrested in Miami after a trek through Europe.

Yitzhak Lerer, charged with helping a cocaine ring smuggle drugs into Israel from the United States, appeared before a federal magistrate Friday to contest his extradition.

He was arrested after a prosecutor in South Carolina issued a warrant at the request of the Israeli gov-

ernment.

Initially, police in Tel Aviv believed Lerer was headed for Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. But he ended up in Miami, where he was arrested by the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA).

Israeli border guards detained Lerer at Ben Gurion Airport outside Tel Aviv, but he escaped. Lerer, who uses four aliases, embarked upon a westward trek that took him through Egypt and Switzerland to the United States.

At one point, authorities

in Zurich found the hotel in which Lerer was staying, but he had already checked out.

The DEA caught up with him in Miami. During an appearance before U.S. magistrate Peter Palermo, Lerer said he wanted to call a friend so he could arrange for an attorney. The judge set another hearing for next Tuesday.

Details of the case — including the role and identity of the diplomat — are sketchy.

But according to the warrant, Israeli police say that

Lerer, 34, was part of a scheme that saw more than eight kilograms of cocaine smuggled into Israel by an unnamed "non-Israeli diplomatic official" who abused his privileges and immunity.

Drugs were smuggled twice, according to the charges — once in August and November.

In the second run, the arrest warrant says, Lerer "personally took possession of the drugs from the diplomatic official involved."

JORDAN TELEVISION
Tel. 73111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

14:05 The Muppet Show
14:30 Comedy — Dad's Army
15:00 French Programmes
16:00 Doc. — Nature's Inventions
16:30 Comedy — Hey Dad
17:00 News Flash
17:02 Documentary
17:15 Drama — Dalton
18:00 Magazine — Cinq Sur Cinq
19:00 Le Journal
19:15 Magazine — Cinq Sur Cinq
19:30 News Headlines
19:35 Roseanne
20:00 Documentary — Global Gardener
20:30 Cinema, Cinema
21:10 The Lazarus Man
22:00 News in English
22:25 Under Suspicion
23:15 Sisters

PRAYER TIMES

05:10 Fajr
06:32 (Sunrise) Duha
11:41 Dhuhur
14:27 'Asr
16:51 Maghreb
18:13 'Isha

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology

It will be partly cloudy with temperatures above their average. At night it will be cold and winds southeasterly moderate. In Aqaba, it will be hot and winds northerly moderate. Seas will be calm.

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church

Sweilieh, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church Tel. 632785.
St. Joseph Church Tel. 634590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440.
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757.
Terra Sancta Church Tel. 622366
Anglican Church Tel. 632826.
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331.
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261.
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751.
Armenian International Church Tel. 827126
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328.
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 845457
The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932.
Church of Nazarene Tel. 675691.
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295
English-speaking Latin Catholics Parish Tel. 614190.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY AMMAN:
Dr. Jihad Sammour 765018
Dr. Ghaleb Zaidieh 736011
Dr. Khalid Asfour 699440
Dr. Bilal Al Sayyed 890280
Ferdows pharmacy 778336
Al Asema pharmacy 637055
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shmeisani pharmacy 637660
Najib pharmacy 847632
IRBID:
Dr. Mazen Abu Al Rob 776852
Al Quds pharmacy (—)
ZARQA:
Dr. Akram Haddad 985550
Khalifeh pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)53200-5, where it should always be verified. Information on other flights are supplied on phone 08 (52700).

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
07:15 Sanaa (RJ)
08:30 Jeddah (add) (RJ)
08:35 Jeddah (RJ)
08:55 Damascus (RJ)
09:30 Aqaba (RJ)
09:45 New Delhi (RJ)
09:50 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
10:05 Beirut (RJ)
16:20 Cairo (RJ)
16:25 London (RJ)
16:45 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
18:20 Jakarta (add) (RJ)
19:05 Bangkok (RJ)
23:20 Casablanca (RJ)
03:40 Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur (RJ)
04:00 Jeddah (add) (RJ)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
06:20 Beirut (RJ)
10:55 Casablanca (RJ)
11:00 Amsterdam, Chicago (RJ)
12:15 Cairo (RJ)
12:15 London (RJ)
12:30 Frankfurt (RJ)
20:15 Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
21:00 Abu Dhabi (RJ)
21:15 Dubai, Muscat (RJ)
22:45 Sanaa (RJ)
23:00 Damascus (RJ)
23:00 Jeddah (add) (RJ)
02:00 Jeddah (add) (RJ)
03:30 Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta (add) (RJ)

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Other Flights
07:45 Khartoum (SD)
09:30 Cairo (MS)

Other Flights
06:30 Khartoum (SD)
07:35 Beirut, London (BA)

AMMAN:
Husseini Medical Centre 31813/32
Khalidi Maternity 644281/6
Aklieh Maternity 642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Malhas, J. Amman 636140

AMMAN:
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 669131
University Hospital 630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 617101
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Dept. 630321
Hotel Complaints 605800
Price Complaints 661176
Water & Sewage Complaints 897467
Amman Municipality Complaints 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone Repairs 623101
Abdali Tel. Repairs 661081
Jordan Television 731111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100
J. Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power Co. 636381
RJ Flight Information 08-53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

PALESTINE, SHMEISANI:
Shmeisani Hospital 669131
University Hospital 630341
845845
Al-Musabir Hospital 667227/9
The Islamic, Abdali 666126/37
Al-Ahli, Abdali 664164/6
Italian, Al-Muhajreen 777101/3
Al-Bashir 775111/26
Army, Marka 891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 602240/80
Amal Hospital 674155
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 865199

ZARQA:
Govt. Hospital (09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital (09)983323
Ibn Sina Hospital (09)986732
Al Hikma Modern Hospital (09)990990
IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital (02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)272275
Ibn Al Nafies Hospital (02)247100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

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Dep. Damascus 7:30 a.m. every Sunday
Arr. Amman 5:00 p.m. every Sunday

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in jils per kg.

Apple 700/500
Banana 550/550
Banana (imported) 850/600
Cabbage 60/40
Carrot 270/150
Cauliflower 130/100
Cucumber (large) 130/90
Cucumber (small) 230/160
Eggplant 150/80
Garlic 850/600
Grape fruit 150/100
Lemon 380/250
Marrow (large) 70/40
Marrow (small) 130/70
Onion (green) 140/60
Onion (dry) 170/100



HRH Princess Basma Sunday opens a branch of the Voluntary Society Union in the Maftaq Governorate. In her address at AL al Bait University, Princess Basma voiced hope that the charity would expand, particularly in the Holy Month of Ramadan (Petra photo)

Prince meets with minister to discuss future tourism projects

AMMAN (J.T.) — One day after opening an international meeting here on tourism promotion, HRH Prince Faisal Bin Hussein Sunday met with Minister of Tourism and Antiquities Saleh Irsheidat and other officials at the ministry for a briefing.

Dr. Irsheidat outlined projects to upgrade services and facilities at tourist sites around the Kingdom and detailed plans to produce documentaries and other informational material and participate in tourist exhibitions in the Arab World and elsewhere to help boost tourism industry to Jordan. The ministry also highlighted some of the programmes designed to safeguard and maintain the country's archaeological sites.

After the Prince's visit, Dr. Irsheidat met with specialists from Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and discussed Tokyo's financial aid to Jordan for tourist projects.

Both sides examined JICA studies, recommendations and plans for the development of the tourist sites in Jordan through the year 2010.

The Japanese team will assess the cost of such projects and accordingly revise the plans, which will be implemented in cooperation with the Jordan Valley Authority as well as Amman, Karak and Salt municipalities and the Ministry of Public Works and Housing in different areas of Jordan.

Last November Japan

announced that it was considering a Jordanian request for a loan of approximately \$76 million to help promote the tourism sector and affirmed that a decision was expected in 1997.

The proposed loan would be used for tourist infrastructure as well as on setting up new tourist sites and upgrading existing ones as part of Jordan's master tourism development plan, ministry sources said.

Tourism and the environment are two major sectors of Japanese focus with regard to assistance to Jordan.

Japan chairs the working group on the environment in the multilateral phase of the Middle East peace process.

AMF grants \$28.702 m in loans to Kingdom

AMMAN (Petra) — The Arab Monetary Fund (AMF) Sunday granted a total of \$28.702 million in loans to the Kingdom to import food supplies and finance pharmaceutical exports to Algeria.

The fund first signed two agreements with the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ), granting \$27.7 million in credit facilities to finance imports of food supplies from various Arab countries.

The agreements were signed by AMF Board Chairman Jassem Manai and CBJ Governor Ziyad Fariz and stipulate that the loan will be channelled through the Arab Trade Finance Programme, a branch of the AFM, and that Jordan can begin to utilise the loan within 18 months.

Later, Dr. Manai signed an agreement for \$1.002 million with the Finance and Exports Bank to help finance exports of drugs to Algeria.

Earlier Sunday, subsequent to a meeting with Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti, Dr. Manai announced that the fund

would grant Jordan credit facilities a sum of up to \$30 million to finance trade with other Arab countries.

Dr. Manai described the AMF as impressed by Jordan's performance in implementing an economic restructuring programme and stated that the fund has already accorded nine loans to Jordan, totalling \$160 million, to back the Kingdom's economic programme.

He told Jordan Television that he reviewed AMF activities with the prime minister and described their meeting as having provided a good opportunity for reviewing topics of interest both to the AMF and to the Kingdom.

Mr. Kabariti was reported by the Jordan News Agency, Petra, as stressing that Jordan places special importance on AMF support of its economic programmes.

The prime minister also expressed appreciation of the fund's continued assistance in regards to the economic programme and towards financing trade with other Arab countries.



Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti meets with AMF Board Chairman Jassem Manai and CBJ Governor Ziyad Fariz to discuss specifics of a multi-million dollar loan to Jordan (Petra photo)

Dr. Manai had earlier convened a meeting with Minister of Industry and Trade Ali Abul Ragheh and reviewed the AMF role in stimulating inter-Arab trade and Jordanian benefits from such operations.

Petra quoted Dr. Manai as saying that the two sides agreed to back the Arab League's current endeavours to develop trade among Arab states as well as the creation of an Arab free trade zone.

The Arab Monetary Fund was founded in 1976 and groups most Arab League member states. It also established a special programme in 1989 to support inter-Arab trade.

Family, JEA dismayed over Israeli detention of Jordanian engineer

By Tanya Habjouqa
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The unexplained Israeli arrest of a Jordanian citizen last week has caused grief and anger to his family and the Jordanian Engineers Association (JEA) is pressing for his immediate release.

Hatem Istanbuli, a Jordanian civil engineer, was arrested Dec. 26 by Mossad, the Israeli secret service, while returning to Jordan via the Sheikh Hussein Bridge subsequent to a brief family visit in the occupied territories.

The JEA, to which Mr. Istanbuli belongs, is "outraged by the unjust arrest" and has contacted ministers, the Embassy of Jordan in Tel Aviv, politicians and other organisations in their attempts to release him, said JEA member Mazen Rial.

Thus far, Israeli authorities have offered no justification for the arrest nor have they allowed Mr. Istanbuli any contact with either his family or legal counsel.

According to Consul of



Hatem Istanbuli

the Embassy of Jordan in Israel, Omar Nahar, Israeli law reserves the right to detain persons for up to 15 days.

"Until now we do not know why Hatem was arrested but we are very concerned as he has a heart condition," Mr. Istanbuli's brother Nasser told the Jordan Times Sunday.

He explained that Hatem Istanbuli left Jordan, Dec. 1 for his visit to Palestine after the Israeli Embassy approved his visa.

"Why did the embassy grant him the visa if [they deemed him suspect]? It

seems to me it was a trap," Nasser Istanbuli maintained.

"Both family and JEA members are wary as to why Mr. Istanbuli was arrested and they offered different theories as to why the Israelis might detain him."

"Hatem is a liberal, open minded man...perhaps his involvement with the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) while studying in Romania 20 years ago could be related (to his detention)," a relative, who requested anonymity, speculated.

"Of course my brother was involved with political organisations, any man with a love for his country would speak out for his land," Nasser Istanbuli said.

Mazen Rial, a member of the JEA, voiced frustration over what he felt was inactivity on the part of the Jordanian government pushing for Mr. Istanbuli's release.

"We have contacted ministers and called on everyone we can but no one has offered any answers or given any indication that any action is being effected. Why is the government not more active?" he lamented.

Officials telephoned Sunday by the Jordan Times were unavailable for comment.

However, "the Embassy of Jordan is doing all that we can," Mr. Nahar stated.

We have spoken with the foreign ministry in Jerusalem in attempts to procure his release and informed them of his heart condition: there are daily attempts at receiving information, all we can do is

wait and hope they will not detain him the full 15 days, Mr. Nahar said.

Nasser Istanbuli voiced the difficulty in answering his nephew's questions as to why the Israelis have detained his father.

"How can I explain this to him when he has been told that there is peace between Jordan and Israel?" Nasser Istanbuli asked.

The JEA has voiced grave concerns about the process of normalisation between Jordan and Israel and reportedly see this situation as a "slap in the face of the peace process," as Mr. Rial asserted.

"I am not against peace with Israel but against this hypocritical so-called peace," he added.

"The Israelis will bear the full responsibility of their actions if any harm befalls Mr. Istanbuli," Consul Nahar concluded.

Meanwhile, Hatem Istanbuli is now enduring his 12th day of detention in Israel without contact with his wife, six-year old son, or lawyer.

40% decrease in international phone calls in effect — JTC

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Jordanian Telecommunications Company (JTC) Sunday announced that a 40 per cent decrease in international telephone calls went into effect at the beginning of this year.

JTC Board Chairman Walid Dweik announced that the new tariff variously applies to different nations which have been divided into five groups.

According to Mr. Dweik, the estimated day rates for a one-minute call will be as follows:

- Group number one includes Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Syria and will register 500 fils for a one-minute phone call.
- Group number two includes Algeria, Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Israel, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Somalia, Sudan, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen has been quoted as recording 700 fils.
- Group number three includes Cyprus and Greece and is slated to cost

one JD each minute.

- Group number four includes Albania, Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Britain, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Gibraltar, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Macedonia, Malta, Monaco, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey and the United States will tabulate to JD 1.35 per minute.
- Group number five is comprised of all other countries not heretofore mentioned at JD 1.5 a minute.

Calls made between 10 p.m. and 3 a.m. will be 30 per cent less than the rates listed above.

Mr. Dweik stated that during public holidays and Fridays local, regional or international calls at any hour will be tabulated as according to the night rates.

Public holidays are considered Labour Day, Independence Day, Army Day,

the King's ascension to the Throne and the King's birthday, he said.

Mr. Dweik also announced that subscription fees to the JTC will remain unchanged for homes and offices.

These fees are JD 125 for home installation, JD 250 for office installation while the annual subscription will remain JD 28 for homes and JD 60 for offices.

Mr. Dweik said that the annual subscription fee can be divided over 12 equal instalments and that it could be paid in monthly instalments.

He said that now any national call (as opposed to merely the inter-governorate calls) is considered a local call and that each subscriber will be monthly offered 335 minutes of free calls.

Mr. Dweik said that once local calls exceed the stipulated 335 minutes, they will be charged nine fils per minute during the day and nine fils per 86 seconds at night.

WHAT'S GOING ON

FILM

"You Kissed the Devil's Rear" at Goethe-Institut, Jabal Amman at 7:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

A photographic exhibition on the life of the Founder of Pakistan at Quaid-e-Azam Hall, Embassy of Pakistan, Jabal Weibdeh (Tel. 622787, 624680) until January 31, 1997.

Plastic art by John Naqashian at the Royal Cultural Centre, until Jan. 9.

Products of the Jordan Design and Trade Centre of Noor Al Hussein Foundation at Movenpick Hotel, Petra, until Jan. 10.

Exhibition of colourful gifts and crafts designed by Andrea Atalla at the Jordan Design and Trade Centre of Noor Al Hussein Foundation, Wadi Sagra Street (Tel. 4102), until Jan. 10.

Works by several artists entitled "The Artist and the Environment" by several artists at Art Gallery, Jabal Amman, until Dec. 30.

Works of small paintings by Jordanian and Arab artists at Baladna Art Gallery, Garin St. (Tel. 687598), until Jan. 14.

Works by Spanish painter Clara Amado at Instituto Cervantes, Jabal Amman until 15.

Works by ten contemporary Indonesian artists entitled "From Scripts to Abstraction" at Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts (open daily except Tuesdays), until Jan. 12.

Joint exhibition by Hind Nasser at the Jordan Arts and Crafts Centre/Artisana, Amman (Tel. 647858), until Jan. 10. Also displaying a regular exhibition of arts and crafts and Christmas items.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Finance group studies draft law

AMMAN (Petra) — Parliament's Finance and Economy Committee Sunday reviewed the Companies Draft Law. Committee Chief Abed Musa Nahar said they will finalise the draft law as soon as possible. Attending the meeting was Minister of Trade and Industry Ali Abul Ragheh.

Ministry to take part in festival

AMMAN (Petra) — The Ministry of Culture will take part in the sixth Cairo Festival for Plastic Arts to be held January 15. Five Jordanian artists are scheduled to participate in the festival.

Munir Sobar visits Tafleeh governorate

TAFILEH (Petra) — Minister of Supply Munir Sobar Sunday visited the Tafleeh governorate and inspected the food supply for Ramadan.

Royal Wings to commence semi-weekly flights to Haifa

AMMAN (J.T.) — Royal Wings, a subsidiary of the national airline Royal Jordanian (RJ), will formally begin semi-weekly flights between Amman and Haifa today, with a direct flight from Marka airport in East Amman to the Israeli port city.

According to an airline announcement, a high-level official delegation will be on the debut flight to Haifa where a ceremony will mark the occasion.

Royal Wings has already commenced five weekly flights between Marka airport and Tel Aviv.

Royal Wings was created last year to conduct flights to neighbouring countries and last November signed an accord and conducted a test flight to Haifa which clocked in at 45 minutes, 10 minutes longer than the Amman-Tel Aviv route according to its Director General Ahd Quntar.

Flights between Jordan

and Israel were launched subsequent to the signing of a peace treaty between the two in October of 1994.

Royal Wings owns two 50-seater planes and had commenced operations last March with two daily flights between Amman and Aqaba and a weekly flight to Sharm Al Sheikh in Egypt.

Last May, the airline announced plans to commence flights between Amman and Gaza in the Palestinian self-rule areas and was negotiating to add Alexandria in Egypt and Tabouq in Saudi Arabia to its destination list.

Future plans also include operating regional flights to Beirut, Damascus and Larnaka in Cyprus.

Royal Wings is owned by Royal Jordanian with a one per cent ownership pertaining to the Royal Jordanian Employees Savings Fund.

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Kabul bomb raid by anti-Taleban jets ends but danger persists

KABUL (AFP) — A bombing raid by anti-Taleban jets here Sunday in which four Afghans were killed and 15 wounded has ended, but the danger of more casualties persists, bomb-disposal experts told AFP.

"Some of the bombs were cluster-bombs, and many live (bombs) have been scattered all over the area," said Homa Yun Farid of the Halo Trust Demining Organisation.

A 250-kilogramme cluster-bomb — of the type dropped on Kabul Sunday — is designed to explode in the air and scatter as many as one hundred 2.5-kilogramme explosive devices over a wide area.

The two jets that attacked Kabul were believed to be Sukhoi SU-22 bombers from forces loyal to northern warlord General Abdul Rashid Dostum.

The ex-Kabul government forces of President Burhanuddin Rabbani which were pushed out of Kabul Sept. 27 by the Taleban have been joined by Gen. Dostum's ethnic Uzbek forces and the Shi'ite religious faction of Karim Khalil.

Mr. Farid's men were clearing the deserted American embassy compound in Kabul's Wazir Akbar Khan District, where they were preparing the demolition of 10 unexploded devices.

"Earlier we had picked up 31 more (bombs) from neighbouring areas, when the embassy guards called us saying a bomb had exploded in the grounds," Mr. Farid said.

The British-based Halo

Trust Deminers had collected the devices from the city's Microrayon Housing Estate, and an intersection in front of the Public Health Ministry where children had been playing with them.

Behind the main U.S. embassy building was a huge crater believed to have been caused by a bomb. No structural damage to the embassy building or casualties were reported.

"While examining the crater we discovered cluster (bombs) all over the area," Mr. Farid said.

He said a large haul of unexploded ordnance lay in the U.S. embassy grounds — tank and artillery shells, rockets and grenades — which the Afghan security staff had collected over the years.

"You only need a stray bullet to set this lot off," said Mr. Farid, as his men set about removing them for demolition.

A second bomb had exploded on a public road behind the embassy smashing a large portion of perimeter wall and wrecking a neighbouring house. Two other houses were totally destroyed by what appeared to be 250-kilogramme bombs.

The U.N. World Health Organisation office which is located next to one of the razed private homes was severely damaged and a U.N. jeep was completely smashed.

A team of bomb disposal experts from the United Nations' demining operation in Kabul were seen collecting the twisted remains

of bomb-casings from the Wazir Akbar Khan area.

"Tomorrow we will do a battle-area clearance search," said Mohammad Zahir of Afghan Technical Consultants (ATC).

In addition to demining, ATC has a special group headed by Mr. Zahir which collects unexploded ordnance from suburban areas for safe demolition outside the capital.

According to information collected from Mr. Farid and Mr. Zahir, eight bombs, including cluster bombs, were dropped on Kabul Sunday.

Many civilian families, as well as the Taleban militia who control Kabul, were seen evacuating their homes from the worst-affected parts of Wazir Akbar Khan.

The motive for the bombing attack was unclear and there was little obvious military advantage to the anti-Taleban alliance from the raid.

Meanwhile, Turkey, Iran and Pakistan Sunday jointly called on the warring sides in Afghanistan to declare a ceasefire before the holy Islamic month of Ramadan begins on Jan. 10.

"A ceasefire should be declared in Afghanistan before Ramadan," Turkey's Islamist Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan said in reading a communique released jointly by Ankara, Tehran and Islamabad.

The related parties should begin negotiations for a peaceful end to the fighting in Afghanistan which threatens regional peace," according to the

communique issued after a meeting between Mr. Erbakan, Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati and Pakistan's Foreign Minister Yaqub Khan.

"The flow of arms and military equipment to the region should be halted without further delay," it said.

The joint declaration came amid reports of a devastating bombing raid by anti-Taleban jets in Kabul which left at least four Afghans dead and 15 wounded.

"Iran, Pakistan and Turkey pledge to do whatever they can to help end the fighting," the communique said, but fell short of announcing a concrete move by the three countries.

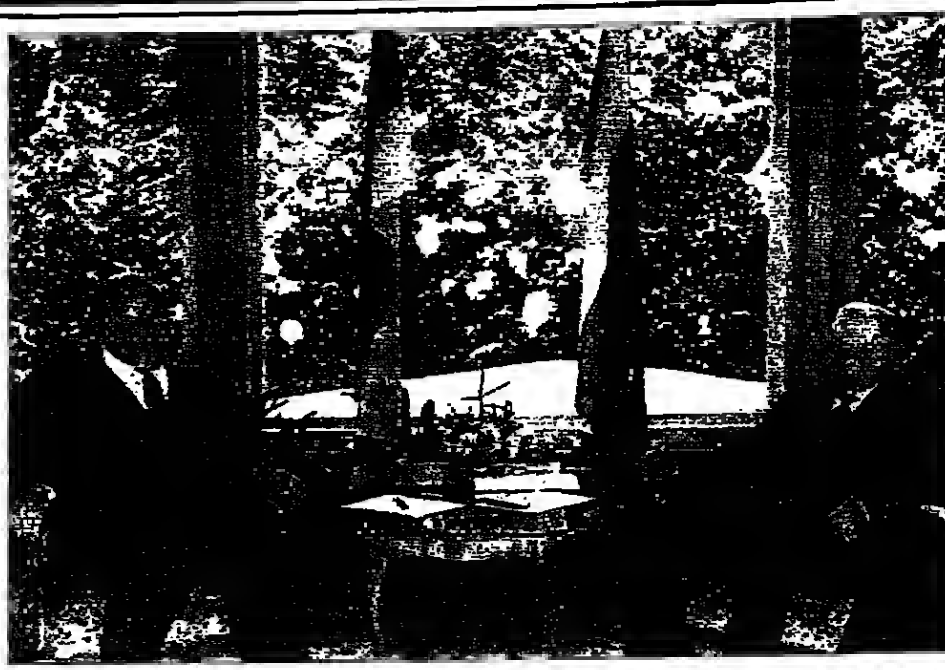
It called for the preservation of Afghanistan's territorial integrity and said there could not be a military solution to the Afghan civil war.

"One single group cannot gain control of the whole country because there are several sects," Mr. Velayati told reporters.

Political analysts said although Turkey, Iran and Pakistan were in agreement on the need for peace, their positions still differed regarding relations with the warring parties.

Pakistan generally backs the Taleban movement, while Iran supports smaller Shi'ite groups.

Gen. Gostum, ethnically of Turkic origin has Turkey's indirect support, diplomatic sources said. Ankara last month sent humanitarian aid to Gen. Dostum's forces.



Russian President Boris Yeltsin holds talks with German Chancellor Helmut Kohl at the 'Rus' hunting lodge in Zavidovo, some 100 kilometres west of Moscow Saturday. Mr. Kohl who regards himself as a personal friend of Mr. Yeltsin is the first Western leader to meet the 65-year-old Russian president since he underwent surgery (Reuter photo)

N. Ireland back on brink; Major begs for restraint

DUBLIN (R) — Northern Ireland edged closer to renewed tit-for-tat violence Sunday after pro-British loyalist guerrillas threatened to end a two-year truce and avenge a new campaign by their pro-Irish IRA guerrilla foes.

British Prime Minister John Major, a driving force behind a peace initiative which gave the province a brief respite from 27 years of sectarian and political war, urged the loyalists not to end their truce by and retaliating against IRA attacks.

"Don't don't don't" he urged in a television interview after politicians close to loyalist guerrillas said the ceasefire was under strain from gunmen who want to avenge IRA violence.

Mr. Major argued that the IRA, which seeks to end British rule to reunite the province with Ireland, had isolated itself by abandoning its own 17-month truce last February.

"At the moment the IRA have isolated themselves by their own wickedness and their own violence. The loyalists should not use that as an excuse for equal wickedness and violence," he said.

But Northern Ireland police and security chiefs said they feared the province was poised for a return to the retaliatory conflict which killed 3,200 in 27 years because of sabre rattling by loyalists, who want the province to remain British.

The combined loyalist military command, the umbrella organisation which groups the two main loyalist guerrilla groups, has issued no statement on the status of the ceasefire its activists declared in October 1994.

But a "senior loyalist source" told the Irish Times that if the latest IRA campaign killed anyone, loyalists would avenge the attack "big time."

The IRA killed one British soldier and injured 30 when it bombed Britain's Northern Ireland Army Headquarters last October and abandoned a huge car bomb in Belfast last week when tight security prevented the guerrillas reaching the city centre.

The outlawed Ulster Freedom Fighters and Ulster Volunteer Force killed hundreds of the 40 per cent Catholic minority from which the IRA draws support until its 1994 truce.

The guerrillas have officially maintained their truce since the IRA went back to war last year to protest against British and Irish demands that they agree to disarm to earn their political wing, Sinn Fein, a seat at Belfast peace talks.

Sinn Fein is excluded from the negotiations until the IRA calls a complete halt to its campaign of attacks on local police, British soldiers and high-profile security targets.

The loyalist truce has allowed their political spokesmen to take part in

the peace talks, which resume on Jan. 13 but which are not expected to make any headway towards a lasting settlement until after a British general election due by May.

Sinn Fein is expected to contest the elections in an attempt to show that it has considerable popular backing for its demand that Britain withdraw from the province.

Its leaders have written to the main Irish nationalist party, the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) suggesting an electoral pact to win the maximum number of seats for their spokesmen in the British parliament.

But SDLP leader John Hume, who has tried to broker a new IRA ceasefire, said in a weekend newspaper article that he would not agree to any pact until the IRA called a ceasefire and Sinn Fein ended a policy of boycotting the British parliament.

He said in the Irish Independent that the SDLP, which has four seats in the British assembly against nine held by pro-British Unionists, could increase its representation to seven or eight if it agreed a pact with Sinn Fein.

Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams won a place in the British parliament in 1983 but party policy is not to take up the seat because it would entail allegiance to Britain.

France says 10 rebels killed, 30 held in Central African capital

PARIS (R) — French troops killed 10 rebels and captured 30 in the Central African Republic Sunday as they struck back against army mutineers who had killed two of their officers trying to mediate, the government said.

A Defence Ministry spokesman said French troops seized several weapons including AK-47 assault rifles, machineguns and RPG rockets in the operation, saying no more attacks were planned for Sunday.

Witnesses said French helicopter gunships fired on mutineers' command posts in Kasai army camp and other areas of the city under rebel control during an operation which began in the middle of the night.

A French military spokesman in Bangui described the operation as one of self-defence following Saturday's killing of two French officers while they were on an inspection visit with a multinational mediation team, and associated attacks.

Witnesses said French helicopter gunships fired on mutineers' command posts in Kasai army camp and other areas of the city under rebel control during an operation which began in the middle of the night.

Earlier, a spokesman for the mutineers said three of their number had been killed in the operation as well as seven civilians, including children, around rebel headquarters in the populous southern district of Petevo.

The Central African Republic is in the grip of its third army revolt within a year. French troops, in the country under a defence pact, intervened to keep President Ange-Felix Patasse in power during the second revolt in May.

S. Korea's union group delays strike

SEOUL (R) — South Korea's outlawed Korea Confederation of Trade Unions (KFTU) said Sunday it would delay strikes by some public-sector union workers to minimise inconvenience to the public.

The confederation had said earlier that unions at state-run corporations, the subway, hospitals and broadcasting companies would join in strikes from Tuesday.

However KFTU spokesman Kim Yoo-Sun said: "We decided to postpone strikes at subways, the state-run Korea Telecom and the Korea Mint Corp. Our enemy is the Kim Young-Sun government and not (the) people."

Thousands of unionised workers staged rallies in big cities including Seoul and Pusan to back their demand

for the repeal of a controversial labour law which gives employers the right to lay off employees, hire temporary workers and replace strikers.

Witnesses said the number of protesters had dropped sharply from Saturday when about 5,000 gathered in Seoul alone.

About 200 unions at the nation's major car makers, shipbuilders and secondary financial institutions, representing 230,000 members, will go on strike from Monday morning as scheduled, the confederation said.

The confederation and the nation's largest union group Federation of Korea Trade Unions (FKTU) said they

would escalate industrial action until the government repeals the law.

The government argues that changes in the law would benefit unions and employers by creating a more flexible labour market.

The two umbrella union groups between them claim a total membership of 1.7 million in most of South Korea's major industries and public-sector services.

Nationwide strikes erupted on Dec. 26 after the ruling New Korea Party pushed through the new labour law during a clandestine session of parliament.

The stoppages, which hit car and ship production, hospitals and subways, were suspended until after the new year holidays in a goodwill gesture to the public.

Kohl sees NATO deal with Yeltsin this year

MOSCOW (R) — German Chancellor Helmut Kohl and Russian President Boris Yeltsin, back in the Kremlin after his heart operation, launched Europe's new diplomatic year Saturday with a call for an end to quarrels over NATO in 1997.

Mr. Kohl, who enjoys a warm special relationship with the Russian leader, sounded an upbeat note after becoming the first in a queue of Western leaders aiming to meet Mr. Yeltsin after being frustrated by Moscow's apparent policy drift for much of 1996.

"We're glad to see you," the chancellor was quoted by Russian news agencies as telling the 65-year-old Yeltsin.

"It's very important that you are back in the Kremlin."

Mr. Yeltsin had to fight off a Communist threat in July's presidential election and then promptly fell ill. He returned to work two weeks ago after a heart bypass operation on Nov. 5.

His Western partners now hope he can start sorting out the bitter dispute over NATO which has soured East-West relations.

Moscow has vehemently opposed the West's plans to allow former Soviet-bloc states in Eastern Europe to join the Atlantic defence alliance, seeing it as a threat to its own security and as a humiliating confirmation of its loss of superpower status.

NATO invitations could go out to Poland, Hungary or the Czech Republic as early as July. Lacking the diplomatic sway to veto the expansion, Russian ministers and officials have adopted a confusing mix of tough and conciliatory language.

Mr. Yeltsin, who still looked tired when he met Mr. Kohl for three hours of talks at the Rus Hunting Lodge outside Moscow, gave no indication of any major breakthrough Saturday.

"We sought a settlement of this issue. We agreed to continue discussion in the future on the theme 'Russia and NATO'," Kremlin spokesman Sergei Yastrzhembsky quoted him as saying.

Mr. Kohl, whose invitation to Germany in April was accepted, sounded more upbeat at a news conference before flying home.

"There are still some differences of opinion," he said. "But we evaluated a couple of ideas which I will discuss with my NATO colleagues over the next couple of days on the telephone."

"I think that this year we will find a rational solution which will make NATO enlargement possible without creating new dividing lines and which will at the same time respect the security interests of all partners concerned."

"The mistrust from the era of the cold war must go. I see a good chance and this chance has to be taken up now and in the coming months," he added, saying it would need much negotiation.

Those talks will add to Mr. Yeltsin's mounting schedule of travel and meetings in the next few months.

He accepted an invitation to Germany in April and, at Mr. Kohl's suggestion, will have talks in the Hague on Feb. 4 with the current European Union president, Dutch Prime Minister Wim Kok.

Mr. Yeltsin, whom Mr. Kohl described as alert and energetic but still needing to take things easy after his operation, plans to welcome French President Jacques Chirac later this month and British Prime Minister John Major at a later date.

Major vows to stay 'cool, calm and elected'

LONDON (R) — British Prime Minister John Major, facing mutiny in his Conservative Party over Europe and rocked by newspaper allegations of a new sex scandal, said Sunday his New Year resolution was to stay "cool, calm and elected."

Opening his 1997 bid to win the general election he must call by May, the prime minister vowed to campaign on substantive issues and open up "clear blue water" between the Conservatives and the opposition Labour party.

Despite trailing Labour by 20 points in most opinion polls, Mr. Major said voters would decide that the British economy was in better shape than anywhere in Europe.

A vote for Labour, out of office since Margaret Thatcher became prime minister in 1979 and launched a Conservative revolution, would amount to a "leap in the dark," Mr. Major said in

a BBC Television interview with Sir David Frost.

Mr. Major said: "Clearly we are outperforming Europe...Prospects for prosperity in the future are very good."

He insisted he would not bow to "Euro-sceptics" in the Conservative Party by ruling out joining a single European currency in the first wave in 1999 as this would throw away Britain's leverage at negotiations.

"I don't think we should throw away that leverage," he said. "We need to be there, arguing our case."

Mr. Major dismissed suggestions that he would stand down from leadership of the Conservative Party, saying "I have given no thought to retirement."

Asked for his New Year's resolution, he said: "I will stay cool, calm and elected."

Mr. Major promised to get closer to the people once the general election campaign opens officially, indicating a

repeat of the "soap box" tactic widely seen as having enabled him to snatch the 1992 election at the last moment.

"I will be seeking much more direct contact with the public when I am out and about in the country," Mr. Major said. His impromptu speeches from a soap box to small groups of voters are thought to have turned the tide for him five years ago.

"We are going to concentrate on the issues but what the other parties decide to do is a matter for them. If they choose to operate from the gutter that is a matter for them."

Mr. Major described secret talks between the main opposition Labour Party and the minority Liberal Democrats about devolution in Scotland and changing the voting system to proportional representation as "profoundly dangerous."

He said Labour and the Liberal Democrats were seeking to gerrymander the

constitution.

On tax, Mr. Major said Labour's instinct was to raise taxes.

"Their first instinct is to spend. The instinct of the Labour Party is different from the Tories (Conservatives)."

"So whatever individual polls may say the reality is that it is deep in the instincts of the Labour Party."

Mr. Major refused to be drawn into the latest row involving a Conservative member of parliament accused of homosexuality.

MP Jerry Hayes Saturday denied allegations in a tabloid newspaper that he had a 16-month affair with a teenage male researcher in the House of Commons.

Mr. Major said: "I don't know the truth of the story. The story has been denied and the matter has been put in the hands of lawyers. So I think it would be prudent to say no more about that."

Press freedom at risk worldwide, media body says

VIENNA (R) — Some 38 journalists were murdered in the pursuit of their work in 1996 in a year that witnessed press freedom under greater threat than ever before, an international media body said Sunday.

The Vienna-based International Press Institute (IPI) said in its 1996 World Press Freedom Review, a survey of nearly 150 countries, that reporters faced the greatest danger in Africa and the Middle East, while countries emerging from totalitarian Communist rule were falling back into old habits.

In Europe, the IPI accused Croatia and Serbia of quashing criticism in the media and singled out Bulgaria, Romania and Slovakia for paying scant attention to the rights of the press.

The Dayton Peace Accord in 1995 not only halted four years of war in former Yugoslavia but also laid down a condition that press freedom should be established and respected, it said.

"Such a condition has not been merely broken, but smashed to smithereens. The Croatian and Serbian leaders have crushed virtually all critical voices," said the IPI, a network of editors and publishers representing media in 88 countries.

Serbian state-run television and radio have made no mention of six weeks of protests against the annulment of opposition victories in local elections in November, the IPI said. "The only independent radio station in Belgrade, B92, was repeatedly jammed, then closed altogether before finally being reopened," the report said.

Albania's general election in May, widely regarded as fraudulent, was accompanied by the violent repression of the opposition and the beating of reporters, the report said. At least seven journalists were assassinated in Russia in 1996, and one each in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

Journalists worldwide were also being intimidated by drug traffickers and crime gangs, the IPI said. "The murder of Ireland's leading investigative reporter, Veronica Guerin, on June 26 was a chilling reminder that such killings occur in societies which...are free," the report said. Guerin had covered the activities of the Dublin underworld.

But the darkest cloud hung over Algeria, where 11 journalists were killed in 1996. Reporters are "trying to walk the tightrope between gov-

ernment censorship and the murderous attempts of the Muslim extremists to silence them," the IPI said.

More journalists had been jailed in Ethiopia than anywhere else in Africa, while many were in detention in Nigeria, it said. Reporters in Rwanda, Burundi and Zaïre were under enormous pressure to take sides in the Hutu-Tutsi conflict.

In the Middle East, the IPI said press freedom remained a rare commodity. It recalled the death in Iran on Nov. 11 of writer Ghafor Hosseini, who according to his friends had no history of heart trouble.

He and journalist Faraj Sarkuhi, who mysteriously vanished last November, had been signatories to a 1994 declaration calling for an end to censorship in Iran.

In Turkey, dozens of journalists and writers were arrested and jailed in 1996, the IPI said. Amnesty International has described Turkey as "one of the world's most dangerous countries in which to pursue a career in journalism."

One bright spot in the Gulf in 1996 was Qatar, where ruler Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani not only abolished censorship but has begun speaking frequently to the press, the IPI said.

In China, the leadership made clear in 1996 that the media's role was to support the state.

"As Beijing toughens its approach to its own press, there are the most rational grounds for fearing for the fate of those Hong Kong journalists who strive to report freely and objectively after the British colony reverts to Chinese rule in June 1997," the report said.

Burmese authorities impeded access to the press by opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi and journalists are punished for criticising the military government, the report said.

South America saw fewer deaths but Mexico was becoming increasingly hazardous with cases of reporters shot, kidnapped, or otherwise intimidated by the government or individuals.

In a call for greater vigilance worldwide, the IPI said even in a tolerant society as Sweden journalists were at risk. Three Swedish reporters were forced into hiding this year after threats from bike gangs whose activities they were covering.

Serbian opposition tests new method of protest

BELGRADE, Yugoslavia — Protest leaders called on supporters to drive their cars downtown to create a pro-democracy traffic jam Sunday in an effort to frustrate police who have blocked marches, citing traffic concerns.

A leading opposition party challenged the president of Yugoslavia, Zoran Djindjic, to explain why a large force of riot police had been deployed.

The Democratic Party said in a letter Sunday that the right to freedom of movement and association can be restricted only when police are searching for a suspect or preventing the spread of contagious diseases, or when the country is under attack.

The opposition has vowed to keep up its daily protests — the fiercest challenge yet to Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic.

"There will be no quiting till our victory is confirmed," opposition leader Zoran Djindjic told about 40,000 demonstrators Saturday. The protests, now in their sixth week, were sparked by the government's annulment of local elections in more than a dozen cities the opposition won.

International fact-finders from the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe reported Dec. 27 that the Serbian opposition had won local elections in Belgrade and 13 other cities.

Mr. Milosevic's close aide, Yugoslav Foreign Minister Milan Milutinovic, later acknowledged that the opposition won nine of 16 district boards in Belgrade. But, he said nothing about the more important Belgrade City Council, which is elected separately.

The OSCE report confirmed the opposition victory in the Belgrade City Council, OSCE spokeswoman Melissa Fleming told the Associated Press Saturday by telephone from Vienna, Austria.

The mayor of Belgrade, an ally of Mr. Milosevic, reportedly resigned in protest over the Serbian leader's refusal to concede electoral defeat in the capital.

The departure of Mayor Nebojsa Covic, reported in Belgrade newspapers Saturday, could not be confirmed. If true, it would mark the first major defection from the core of the president's Socialist Party.

Two independent newspapers, Nasa Borba and Dnevni Telegraph, reported that Mr. Covic decided Friday to leave office Saturday. Mr. Covic's office was closed Saturday and he could not be reached to confirm the reports.

Mr. Milosevic's regime remained defiant Saturday. Election officials in Nis, Serbia's second-largest city, ordered a repeat of the Nov. 17 vote. Opposition leaders who assert they won the election said they would boycott.

"There is no way that we'll take part in any new elections. We have won, and that's it," said Zoran Zivkovic, an opposition leader in Nis.

Mr. Zivkovic warned that unless Mr. Milosevic concedes by Tuesday, tens of thousands of Nis residents would go to Belgrade next week and march to the president's home.



A man clears his car of snow in the south eastern French town of Lyon Sunday. France enters its second week of Siberian weather and forecasters said the cold was likely to worsen next week (Reuters photo)

Freeze hits travel in Europe as 6 more die

PARIS (AFP) — The big freeze across Europe claimed at least six more lives in Britain, Ireland, Switzerland, Spain and Germany, as road and rail travellers Sunday faced another day of chaos.

The intense cold in Britain took its 11th victim in 10 days, when a 23-year-old man found unconscious overnight on a frozen lake in Warwickshire died some hours after being taken to hospital.

In Ireland, a 25-year-old man died after crashing through the thin ice of a lake near Gort, in County Galway, while trying to rescue his dog.

Similar incidents have claimed the lives of three dog lovers in Britain in the past week. Ironically, the dog survived in each case.

Police in Britain have made a particular appeal to dogwhisperers to keep their pets on a leash and away from frozen waterways.

Temperatures were less cold overnight Saturday, the lowest being minus two degrees Celsius (28 degrees Fahrenheit), as against a low of minus 12 (10 degrees Fahrenheit) the previous night.

In Switzerland, freezing rain was blamed for a head-on collision Sunday between two cars on the Lausanne-Bern Highway that killed two women, aged 68 and 28, police said.

In Spain, a French lorry driver was killed early Sunday in the northern Burgos province after his truck slid out of control on an icy road.

The accident happened in the same area where three people were killed Friday in a car crash caused by heavy snow on the road.

The freezing weather is believed responsible for the deaths of at least 16 people in Spain since last week.

The capital Madrid was hit by heavy snowfalls early Sunday and the authorities advised against road travel in the region.

Heavy snowfalls across Spain have cut off hundreds of people in a number of isolated villages in Galicia in the northwest. Leon in the centre and Asturias in the north, while Andalusia has been hit by flooding after the region's heaviest rains in a century fell last month.

In Germany, a man in his 50s who had been missing for several days was found dead Saturday at Magdeburg, in the east of the country, police said. His death brought to 42 the number of cold-linked fatalities in Germany.

Rescue services meanwhile used a helicopter to pluck three stranded men from a chunk of ice in a bay on the North Sea near Wilhelmshaven, in the north-west, police added.

At Frankfurt Airport, Germany's largest, some 30 flights were affected by the cold.

In France, transport authorities said heavy snowfalls in Auvergne in central France made driving conditions treacherous.

In Paris, a spokesman for the National Road Travel Information Centre, Jacques Chretien, said driving conditions were "difficult but not impossible."

The authorities urged road users "to adapt to the weather conditions and not to exceed 50-60 kilometres an hour."

Authorities in Mediterranean port city of Marseilles called on motorists to defer travel Sunday due to heavy snowfalls.

French railways SNCF has meanwhile warned of disruptions due to the weather and major delays in the southwest.

The delays are affecting thousands of French holidaymakers returning from Christmas holidays in the Alps.

Around 7,000 households in the lot region of southwestern France have been without electricity due to the weather, authorities in Toulouse said.

Some 150 people sheltered in emergency accommodation overnight after they had to abandon their vehicles on snowbound roads. They were put up in a youth hostel, a hospital and hotels in the Cahors area.

Portugal has been largely spared the weather-borne chaos, being experienced elsewhere. While some secondary roads were closed due to heavy snowfalls in the mountainous centre, Lisbon basked in bright sunshine where temperatures reached 12 degrees Celsius early Sunday.

In Faro, in the south, it was 15 degrees Celsius.

Clinton declares disaster in flood-hit California

SAN FRANCISCO (R) — President Bill Clinton declared a major disaster in California and Idaho Saturday as the western United States reeled from storms and floods that have killed at least 20 people and forced 100,000 from their homes.

Officials said more than 1,000 homes were under water in central California and 450 more north of Sacramento. Preliminary flood damage estimates from six northern and central California counties — just a small proportion of those affected — exceeded \$50 million, officials said.

"Our thoughts and prayers are with those who have lost loved ones or their homes and businesses in these terrible floods," Mr. Clinton said in a statement released during his vacation in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

His disaster declaration makes federal aid available to flood victims and local governments in 13 Idaho counties and 37 California counties. Nevada, Oregon and Washington state have also been hard hit in the last 10 days by powerful storms that caused widespread floods, mudslides and power outages.

The storms are estimated to have caused hundreds of millions of dollars of property damage and were blamed for the deaths of at least 20 people, mostly killed by drowning, by falling trees or in traffic accidents.

Dry weather across most of the west Saturday allowed flood waters to recede and let evacuees return to clean up mud and debris in northern Nevada and northern California's wine country.

But the California Office of Emergency Services said more than 1,000 homes were under water in Stanislaus county in the state's fertile central valley where the Tuolumne River reached a record 14 feet (4.2 metres) above flood stage.

Up to 3,000 people were evacuated from the Modesto area of the county, which suffered its worst flooding in 40 years, but about 150 families were allowed to return later.

California Agriculture Secretary Ann Veneman toured flooded central valley areas by helicopter but said it would be difficult to assess farmland damage until water recedes.

"In all, about 100,000 Californians remained evacuated, most of them from four towns north of Sacramento where the surging Feather River broke through a levee, flooding some 450 homes and 52 square kilometres of farmland, officials said.

Only the roofs of dozens of homes were visible amid the murky brown water that stretched as far as the eye could see. Families and pets stranded on the roofs of houses were pulled to safety in daring helicopter rescues. Thousands of bored and anxious evacuees took refuge in Red Cross shelters.

An act of nature brought good news to emergency officials anxiously watching the sea of muddy water spread toward the outskirts of the small towns of Olivehurst and West Linda, 80 kilometres north of Sacramento.

The floodwater built up on the wrong side of a levee that was holding back another river and the pressure broke that levee, channelling the water into the river. The floodwater stopped advancing and stabilised.

"It's a definite improvement for us. Our floodwater has stopped advancing," Bill Harris, a spokesman for Yuba County Office of Emergency Services, said. "It's doing us a favour."

While there were no human casualties, a lot of livestock was lost in the flood, Mr. Harris said. A team from the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals helped rescue animals and pets while local people led horses and sheep to safety.

In Reno, Nevada, cleanup was under way after the Truckee River burst its banks this week, pouring muddy water through the downtown area and forcing some casinos to close.

Cooler, drier weather brought relief to Washington and Oregon, pounded by more than a week of snow and heavy rain. "Things are getting better," Ken Keim, of the Oregon Emergency Management Division said. "The water is going down slowly."

2 white miners arrested after S. African blasts

JOHANNESBURG (R) — South African police have arrested two white men in connection with Sunday's three bomb blasts near Johannesburg, the second incident in two weeks involving attacks by suspected white rightwingers.

The explosions at a mosque, post office and shop occurred around midnight at and around the conservative town of Rustenburg in north west region.

Two black men sleeping at the mosque were slightly hurt in the explosion, which stopped the mosque's clock at exactly 12 minutes past one Sunday morning.

"I woke up (and) thought it is an earthquake," said Moemin Isaac Ibrahim, speaking from his hospital bed where he was being treated for a leg wound. He said he was from the Sudan on a visit to South Africa.

Two white mineworkers were arrested in connection with the blasts at a road-block outside the small platinum mining town of Mooi Nooi Sunday morning.

Police captain Belinda Kleynhans said Christian Harmse, 26, and Pierre Jacobs, 32, were taken to court after their arrests.

Their case was postponed to Jan. 10. They were refused bail by the court and would be kept in custody, she said.

Explosives materials were allegedly found in the car they were driving and at one of the men's homes. Ms. Kleynhans said. They were in a car similar to one seen outside the mosque before the bomb went off, and at the shop blast.

The country's Muslim Judicial Council president, Nazeem Mohammad, told state radio the council would meet later Sunday to plan strong action in reply to the mosque attack.

"We will have to retaliate in a manner that will make the country know that acts of such a nature are not only unwanted but are something that call for the condemnation of all the people of the country," Mr. Mohammad said.

Police said they were investigating ties between the north west blasts and a Christmas Eve bombing that killed four people in a town 90 kilometres north-east of Cape Town.

An unknown white right-wing group called the Boere Attack Troop (BAT) has claimed responsibility for the twin pipe bomb attack at a supermarket and pharmacy in Worcester.

Russian Interior Ministry troops quit Chechnya

MOSCOW (R) — All Russia's Interior Ministry troops have left the rebel region of Chechnya, but some Defence Ministry units remain, officials said Sunday.

Lieutenant-General Pavel Maslov, chief of staff of the Interior Ministry troops, told RIA news agency the withdrawal, ordered by President Boris Yeltsin, had gone ahead "strictly according to plan" and "without incident."

He did not say when the pullout had been completed in the RIA report, which was confirmed by the ministry.

A spokesman for the Defence Ministry said by telephone some army units were still in Chechnya and could not say exactly when they would leave.

In November, Mr. Yeltsin ordered all Russian troops, both from the defence and interior ministries, to leave Chechnya to clear the way for general elections there scheduled for Jan. 27.

There have been conflicting reports over the deadline for the withdrawal but an Interior Ministry spokesman said Gen. Maslov was directly in charge of operations and had up-to-the-minute information.

Gen. Maslov told RIA the confusion had been intentional and dictated by the need "to avoid possible provocations." He added that all the troops' equipment had also been withdrawn.

Indonesian tribes agree to end rioting

JAKARTA (R) — Rival groups involved in tribal rioting in Indonesia's West Kalimantan province have agreed to end the disturbance, the Repubblica newspaper reported Sunday.

It quoted Kalimantan's military commander Major-General Namuri Anoem as telling the paper Saturday the rival parties, whom he did not name, agreed to sign a peace charter Sunday to end the rioting in which five people were killed.

Republika said the charter would be signed by the local customary and community leaders and government officials. It gave no other details and police and military officials declined comment.

The riot was sparked last Monday by a brawl between two groups of youths over a woman during a concert in Sanggau Ledo district.

Mobutu, Moi to discuss Zaire crisis

HARARE (R) — Kenyan President Daniel Arap Moi flies to Zaire Monday for a meeting with President Mobutu Sese Seko to discuss the continuing crisis in the Great Lakes region. Kenyan Foreign Minister Stephen Musyoka said Sunday.

Mr. Musyoka said the meeting at Mr. Mobutu's jungle palace of Gbadolite was a follow-up to last December's Nairobi summit of 10 African leaders, boycotted by Kinshasa, which discussed the deteriorating situation in central Africa after ethnic Tutsi rebels seized control of eastern Zaire.

"My president's mission will be aimed at communicating the decisions of the Nairobi summit to President Mobutu," Mr. Musyoka told Reuters.

Mr. Musyoka, who was in Harare for a Zimbabwe-Kenya Joint Commission meeting to look at ways of promoting trade between the two countries, said Monday's meeting was at Mr. Mobutu's invitation.

He said Mr. Mobutu had also invited South Africa's Nelson Mandela, Zimbabwe's Robert Mugabe and Cameroonian President and Organisation of African Unity Chairman Paul Biya to Gbadolite.

But Zimbabwean officials said Mr. Mugabe could not make it due to a prior commitment and Mr. Musyoka said it was unclear whether Mr. Biya and Mr. Mandela would attend.

He denied suggestions that the meeting was aimed at patching up strained relations between Nairobi and Kinshasa following accusations by Zaire that the December summit was organised by English-speaking African countries to destabilise it.

"There's no tension at all between us. Those remarks by the (Zairean) information minister were due to misunderstanding of the Nairobi summit," Mr. Musyoka said.

He said Mr. Arap Moi, Mr. Mandela, Mr. Mugabe and Mr. Biya were tasked by the Nairobi summit to secure an early meeting with Mr. Mobutu to discuss ways of resolving the Central African crisis.

"The intention of my president is to brief his colleagues as soon as he comes back from Gbadolite," Mr. Musyoka said.

On what Kenya expected to come out of Monday's meeting, he said: "In Africa, when a neighbour's house is on fire you do what you can to assist to put it out. But the issues in Zaire are intricate... We have to continue to respect Zaire's territorial integrity. That is very important."

"President Arap Moi will not be expected to go to Zaire and lecture them on their internal situation. It must be the Zaireis who must take leadership in resolving their problems. This is an internal matter and they must help us to resolve the situation which has split over into the region," he said.

Meanwhile, Zaire's radical opposition said it no longer considered President Mobutu head of state and that it rejected new bank notes due to be released on the market Monday.

The president of the Sacred Union (USOR) radical opposition announced the decision at a meeting Saturday at the headquarters of Etienne Tshisekedi's Union of Democracy and Social Progress (UDPS) party, its leading member.

"The USOR... has taken the solemn decision no longer to recognise Mr. Mobutu as head of state and guarantor of the nation," Mputu Ndiwwe said. Some 200 USOR militants attended.

Mr. Mputu said a wide-ranging campaign of civil disobedience would begin this month to end Mr. Mobutu's 31-year rule, adding that militants must be prepared to shed their blood to end dictatorship in Zaire.


Mr. Mputu called the new bank notes a "poisoned present" and inflationary and said people would do better not to use them.

The Central Bank says demand within the monetary system makes the issue of the new 100,000 zaire, 500,000 zaire and one million zaire notes necessary.

The announcement also follows a government declaration that it is ready to provide unpaid soldiers with resources to combat rebels who have seized territory in eastern Zaire.

Riots broke out in 1992 during an opposition-led boycott of new banknotes, including a five million zaire unit. The notes now in circulation were issued a year later when Zaire launched an economic reform programme.

Islamic Academy of Sciences



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Saving the peace

DESPITE THE repeated assertions that an agreement on Israeli troops redeployment from Hebron is within reach, all indications are that the Palestinians and Israel still have major differences not just over Hebron but also over other vital issues necessary for getting the peace process back on track. Benjamin Netanyahu has not changed. His policies still betray extremism, arrogance and lack of commitment to the cause of peace in the region. Netanyahu the prime minister is no different from Netanyahu the opposition leader — only more hardliner and subject to pressure from elements more extreme than his Likud Party members. In the cabinet, Netanyahu is also susceptible to pressure from coalition partners whose stands on the peace process almost make the policies of the Likud look moderate.

Which means that the peace process is far from some difficult and challenging times. But these challenges should not be allowed to crush the efforts and hopes of peace advocates. In those difficult times, more work is required by those who believe that peace must prevail in the Middle East. The United States must work harder to ensure that painstakingly achieved progress in Arab-Israeli peace talks is not wasted. Europe must move more assertively to save the region and its interests from the catastrophe that could develop if the peace process fails.

So must Arab countries do their share in helping rescue the peace process. The Israeli government should be punished for its policies. But peace as a strategic choice should not be abandoned. Giving up on peace would mean giving up on the future of the region. That cannot be an option.

And this is exactly what Jordan has been doing since the current stagnation in the peace talks threatened the return to the days of fear and war. Just as it did not lack the courage to make peace with Israel on the basis of regaining its usurped rights, Jordan did not lack the courage to warn that Israeli policies are pushing the peace process astray from its ultimate goal of achieving comprehensive peace in the Middle East. The Kingdom's warning were clear in pointing to the danger awaiting the area if agreements are not fulfilled and the initial commitment to just and all inclusive peace is betrayed. But the warnings were even clearer in asserting that they emanate from a concern for peace and not a loss of faith in it. When Jordan spoke out against the policies of the Netanyahu government it did so to save the peace process. Its words were thus directed to the international community, to the Arab World, to the Israeli government and to the Israeli people.

The despair that has developed since the return of the Likud to power in Israel requires that action similar to that of Jordan is taken. The Israeli government should be made to realise the danger inherent in its policies by all possible means. It should be forced to change these policies and give the Palestinians and the Syrians and the Lebanese back their rights. But the commitment to peace should not waver. For the people of the region, peace is not a luxury that they can live with or without. It is a must. Peace that recognises the rights of all and ends the suffering of some is too precious to be gambled with. It is too precious to loose to the short-sightedness, arrogance and limitedness of hardliners in the body politic of Israel.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AS THE date of the opening of the Israeli trade exhibition in Amman is drawing near, more and more voices are heard denouncing its cancellation because of the public's feelings against normalisation with Israel and as a rejection of Israel's practices and continued occupation of Arab territories, said a writer for Al Rai Sunday. A national Jordanian committee has been formed to coordinate efforts to boycotting the exhibition and it has been decided that a sit-in will be staged near the exhibition site, at Marj Al Hamam, coinciding with the opening date, said the columnist writing under the pseudonym Meem. The committee groups representatives of the various trades and professional unions in Jordan as well as the business community which strongly opposes the organisation of the Israeli exhibition in due to Israel's hampering the entry of Jordanian goods into the Israeli and Palestinian markets, contrary to what had been agreed on in the supplements of the Jordan-Israel peace treaty, said the writer.

A WRITER for Al Dostour discussed the fate of the Ma'in Spa, whose government-controlled management has reported losses over the past years, and suggested that the spa complex be turned over to the private sector. Mohammad Saoud said that at least seven foreign and Arab firms have already offered to run the spa facility and the high price that it is economically feasible and can be made to earn profits. For seven years the spa management has reported losses simply because the government has provided incapable of running it successfully, he added. It is noted that all government-controlled projects, like the glass factory, Al Shaab daily newspaper and the timber firm, in addition to the Ma'in Spa Complex, have failed and therefore the involvement of the private sector in these businesses has become imperative, to avoid further failure and losses and to earn revenues for the treasury, he said. The writer added that it is not in the interest of Jordan, and the public, to delay wise action in this matter, adding that the Jordanian private sector should be given priority over all other bidders in managing the country's institutions.

Economic Review

By Dr. Yusuf Mansur

Improving productivity the Grameen Bank way

THERE IS a bank in Bangladesh that reverses supply-side economics, rejects Keynesian ethos of government carrying the burden of correcting the economy, and makes Monetary Theory seem remote and outdated. It is a bank which lends small amounts of money (as low as \$30) to destitute people to start their own business. Here is how it does it:

Grameen Bank, as it is known in Bangladesh, is a 20-year-old bank that was started by Mohammad Yunus, a 56-year-old banker with a Ph.D. in economics from Vanderbilt University in the U.S. He started teaching economics in Bangladesh in the midst of the man-made famine which claimed over 1.5 million lives. Even though he was a diligent theorist, Yunus felt the foolishness of teaching Western theories to the few while the masses were facing daily tragedies. He started thinking of ways to help the poor. Upon close inspection, he found that many poor people were simply in need of money to purchase the equipment necessary to produce goods and become self employed. So he started, with the help of some of his students, to look for individuals who wanted to start a small business but lacked the cash. That is how the Grameen Bank started. Its lending rules are very simple:

- Loans are usually small amounts. In practice, this is contrary to normal banking policy; banks usually encourage lending large amounts to few customers to reduce processing costs.
- To avoid large end-of-period payments, repayment commences one week after receipt of the loan.
- Debt repayment is in equal weekly instalments. This is a simple policy that helps unsophisticated borrowers plan their credit dealings.
- Interest is a 15 per cent simple rate (not compounded) which makes calculations simple for both the client and the bank. The simple rate allows the client to know the cost of the debt without resorting to what may often seem to poor illiterate villagers as a very advanced technology.
- Monitoring of debt, which is a very important and sometimes costly task in banking, is done through the use of relatives and peer pressure. The bank requires no collateral. It lends to relatives or friends who guarantee each other's debt. Thus, if one fails to pay back his debt, the

group carries the burden of repayment. At the same time, loans are made to those who need them the most: the ones who own nothing. The default rate at the bank in 1996 was 1 per cent, a rate which would be envied by banks in Jordan and elsewhere in the world.

• The bank lends to the needy, that is why 94 per cent of the bank's borrowers are women. Interestingly enough, the bank has found that women are better at paying back their debts than men.

• The bank has no phones, offices, typewriters or anything that resembles normal banks. Its employees travel to the rural area in search of clients. In this manner, Grameen has lent in 1996 over \$4,000 million to 2 million people in 35,000 villages. It is expected to lend \$975 million in 1997.

• The bank is 92 per cent owned by the clients, the rest is owned by the government. The Grameen Bank is very successful: half of its 2 million clients have already managed to pull themselves above the poverty line and more than one fourth is hovering around the poverty line.

But can this experience be transplanted elsewhere in the world? There have been several attempts in Asia and Africa to do similar projects with varying degrees of success. The bank presently has 52 initiatives around the world.

As a rule, this attempt to enhance the productivity of the poor is only successful in places where the social fibre is strong. In other words, the community feeling must exist. Otherwise a Grameen-type bank will ultimately fail. The Grameen Bank has failed in urban areas in Bangladesh, where the community spirit is weaker, and it has succeeded in the rural areas, where people are taught, out of necessity, to depend on and trust each other.

The Grameen Bank, by providing micro-credit to needy entrepreneurs, underscores, to theoretical and applied economists, that macro-economy is the sum of the micro-economics of individuals and markets. Furthermore, it sends a clear message that help to communities can arise out of the very little that a nation has, and out of the will of individuals, no matter how poor they are, because self help is the best kind of help.



An Israeli hawk decries 'Bibispeak' and warns of explosion

By Anthony Lewis

JERUSALEM — "I have strong emotions about the purs of the Land of Israel that are heavily populated by Palestinians," Ehud Barak said.

"It has to do with the roots of our civilisation. But it's clear to me that in reality we cannot hold all this territory. Towards the end of the 20th century we cannot have messianic dreams."

Mr. Barak, a military hero turned politician, retired as chief of staff at the end of 1994 and soon joined the Labour government. Shimon Peres made him foreign minister before Labour lost the election last May. Now he is the likely successor to Mr. Peres as party leader.

In a talk in his Knesset office, he was hitting critical of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

"In six months," Mr. Barak said, "he has lost the most precious asset we developed in the last few years with the Palestinians."

President Mubarak, King Hussein, even to an extent President Assad. That is confidence in the seriousness of the intentions of the Israeli leadership to consider far-reaching, calculated risks in order to achieve a stable peace.

"The litmus test is the attitude towards separation and sovereignty west of the Jordan River. We (the Labour Party) say we need to

separate in order to create mutual respect and eliminate the sense of patronising. We don't want to control other people. We want the Palestinians to define their political will outside our sovereignty."

"Netanyahu tries to hide it, but he clearly wants only one sovereignty west of the Jordan. For us, that means we are heading inevitably towards a binational state, if the Palestinians vote for the Knesset, or a non-democratic one. It would be either apartheid or more probably Belfast, Bosnia or Beirut."

"The prerequisite for a stable Middle East is that we recognise the needs and sensitivities of our inevitable partners. They're going to be there forever. You don't choose your parents, and a people cannot choose its neighbours — especially when it came back from all around the globe to a certain piece of real estate"

Mr. Barak said Prime Ministers Peres and Yitzhak Rabin had used ambiguity constructively, to create in the Oslo agreement a framework that would gradually build mutual confidence. But Mr. Netanyahu, he said, aims to accelerate negotiations in order to prove that the Palestinians are stubborn and will not agree. And that "might lead to an explosion."

By issues of peace and security.

"We believe peace is not something you have to pay for with security," he said. "but the opposite — a contribution to security."

"The Likud, in spite of all the bravado, the machismo, begins with a primal anxiety: A kind of diaspora fear. As if we were not the strongest power in the Middle East."

"From the security standpoint we are living through a window of opportunity, after the demise of the Soviet Union and the defeat of Iraq in the Gulf war. We enjoy a unique superiority over any combination of hostile players."

But there are quite disturbing phenomena looming over the horizon: The prospect of another wave of fundamentalist radical Islam, or another wave of state-sponsored terror or nuclear force in the hands of individuals like Saddam Hussein.

"We cannot control the evolution of such things, but we can make a determined attempt at relaxing the inner ring of countries around us."

"That's the Rabin-Peres vision: Use the opportunity to try to reach a reasonable, even a fragile set of agreements backed by the international community. That would make it much more difficult for an Iran or Iraq to nurture active hostility against Israel."

Some in the Labour Party regard Mr. Barak — the most decorated soldier in Israel's history — as too hawkish. But that image would no doubt be helpful with an electorate so driven

Human Rights File

Jordanians' right to property in Israel must be granted

By Waleed M. Sadi

JORDANIANS TOOK it for granted that rights regarding their properties in Israel would be adequately addressed in the Israeli-Jordanian peace treaty of 1994. It came like a shock to discover that these rights ended up without proper resolution, for unknown reasons.

Israel insists, even in the post-treaty period, that Jordanian properties within Israel will continue to be treated as absentee-owned properties, notwithstanding the formal peace agreement that was supposed to end all vicissitudes of the pre-treaty era.

Israel's claim that the treaty does not affect the status of lands and houses owned or acquired by Jordanians prior to the treaty is disturbing and appears to run counter to at least the spirit of the treaty.

It is untenable, from both the political and the legal points of view, that Jordanians' rights to their property be treated as divisible (have different value during two different periods) as if the treaty aimed to settle post-treaty issues only and leave all outstanding issues pertinent to the earlier period unresolved. This is not what peace treaties are supposed to do and if our treaty with Israel did in fact lead to this unacceptable situation, then there is in it a grave omission that should not have been allowed to take place.

Going over the text of the peace treaty again, I found nothing specific on this point. Beyond the wording of Article 3, which states that the parties will apply the principles of international law governing relations among states in times of peace, there was nothing else to suggest that the issue had caught the attention of the negotiators. There is a reference in Article 7 about removing all discriminatory relations and terminate economic boycotts, but here is nothing mentioned about the economic rights or rights to property of Jordanians in Israel.

A faint expression of support for Jordanians owing properties in the Jewish state could be found in Article 11(d) which states something to the effect of "to ensure mutual enjoyment by each other's citizens of the process of law within their respective legal systems and before their courts."

Notwithstanding all the foregoing general guidelines, the subject matter of Jordanians' rights to property per se was never touched upon. This is indeed a puzzle for me. When I raised this matter with an Israeli lawyer, he asked me bluntly why Jordan never insisted on clearcut resolutions during the negotiations.

Minister of Information Marwan Muasher, nevertheless, raised this issue in a persistent way with the Israeli government when he was still Jordan's ambassador to Israel. I still remember him say that Jordan totally rejects the Israeli stand on the subject and will insist on its satisfactory resolution, meaning bring an end to the treatment of Jordanians as absentee owners when it comes to real estate owned or acquired by them prior to October 1994, when the treaty went into effect.

Former Prime Minister Prince Zaid Ben Shaker is also reputed as having flatly rejected the Israeli allegation that the status of Jordanian properties is not to be positively affected by the treaty. Jordanians waited with a great deal of anticipation for the results of Jordanian diplomatic protestations, but nothing concrete happened to date.

Admittedly, what I am talking about here is billions of dollars worth of properties which, once repossessed by their rightful owners, would add much to the wealth of Jordan. I am not talking about refugees' right to repatriation or compensation but about a distinct issue related to individual properties belonging to Jordanians.

There should be a full peace regime governing Jordanian-Israeli relations. Since the goal of the peace treaty was to remove all hostility, past and present, between the two countries and peoples, it stands to reason that Jordanians should be allowed to restore their economic rights that were adversely affected by the era that preceded the treaty.

Israel cannot treat Jordanians as absentee owners while, at the same time, telling us that there is a complete and full peace between us which calls for full and complete normalisation between the two sides, including of course our respective peoples.

The fact that the previous government of Prince Zaid Ben Shaker found enough substance and justification in Jordan's affirmation that its citizens cannot be treated as absentee owners any longer would suggest that the current government of Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti may still pursue this subject with the Israeli side.

If the treaty language is silent on this point, then it needs to be taken up again as an issue that is organically related to its spirit. We, Jordanians, have all the right to expect that the peace agreement with the Jewish state has transformed us from absentee owners into legal owners, with complete possession rights.

The war condition that permeated Jordanian-Israeli relations in the past, may have necessitated treating Jordanians as absentee owners. But the raison d'être for this classification has been rendered null and void by the peace treaty. Anything short of this assessment would give added ammunition to Jordanians who believe that normalisation with Israel is a one-way street aiming only at serving the Jewish state's peculiar interests and objectives. And this is not the basis on which to inculcate a culture of peace between the two peoples.

Restoring Jordanians' rights to property in Israel does not mean allowing them residency permits. Jordanians own properties all over the world but that was never translated into emigration rights, nor could it be. If a Jordanian can own an apartment in New York City without enjoying an automatic right to live in it, he or she may also own a piece of real estate in Israel without acquiring an absolute right to live on it.

Nevertheless, given the fact that many affected Jordanians are of Palestinian origin, the resolution of their right to property in Israel would lead to a resolution of the broader refugee issue, which is a distinct and separate subject.

stormy weather," he said, adding that in any case "Syria never harboured any illusions on the U.S. position because from the beginning, it considered the United States a strategic ally of Israel."

Study: UAE to maintain high per capita income until 1998

ABU DHABI (AFP) — The United Arab Emirates (UAE) will maintain its high per capita income in the next two years despite the rapid growth in its population, an official study has shown.

Per capita income is currently estimated at around 60,000 dirhams (\$16,400) and the level will remain almost unchanged until 1998, said the study by the department of Abu Dhabi's crown prince.

It said the per capita income would be supported by a projected economic growth of 3.5 per cent in 1997 and 1998. It gave no figures on the growth in the UAE's population but independent estimates put it at three to four per cent.

The UAE has remained among the countries having the highest per capita incomes over the past decade due to its large oil and gas exports.

Such exports fetch it an average \$13-\$15 billion a year and the earnings have helped it to sharply boost the gross domestic product (GDP) through pumping huge investments in the non-oil sector.

The per capita income is calculated in the UAE by dividing the GDP over the population. The latest figures on the GDP and population were published in 1995 when they stood at \$38 billion and 2.3 million

respectively. The study predicted GDP to hit a record 160 billion dirhams (\$43.5 billion) in 1998.

The UAE produces around 2.16 million barrels per day of oil under an OPEC-assigned quota but its actual capacity is far higher.

Meanwhile, a surge of nearly 20 per cent in world oil prices has sharply boosted the UAE economy in 1996 and another good year is forecast in 1997.

According to an official study conducted by the state-run Emirates Industrial Bank (EIB), GDP soared by around nine per cent to 157 billion dirhams (\$42.77 billion) in 1996 from 144 billion dirhams (\$39.23 billion) in 1995.

But EIB officials told AFP the growth figures were nominal as inflation, which has been running at over five per cent in the past few years, had not been calculated.

"Even if you calculated inflation, the GDP last year recorded positive growth due to the sharp increase in the oil exports," an EIB official said.

In its monthly bulletin published in local newspapers on Sunday, EIB said the oil sector grew by around 15 per cent and the non-oil sector by 6.3 per cent.

Oil alone stood at 56.5

billion dirhams (\$15.39 billion) compared with 49.2 billion dirhams (\$13.40 billion) in 1995.

It was one of the highest growth rates since the oil boom of early 1980s and was caused mainly by a rise of around \$3 in oil prices.

From \$16.8, the price of OPEC's basket of seven crudes shot up to around \$20 in 1996, the highest in nearly 13 years.

The increase has also benefited the economies of other Arab Gulf states. Saudi Arabia, the world's top oil supplier, reported a growth of 8.6 per cent last year while its oil earnings jumped by more than \$8 billion.

The EIB study showed that the UAE's manufacturing sector, the focus of economic diversification programmes, grew by 5.6 per cent to 13.2 billion dirhams (\$3.59 billion) from 12.5 billion dirhams (\$3.40 billion). All other non-oil sectors also recorded positive growth rates.

It said the surge in oil prices also expanded the surplus in the trade balance by nearly 50 per cent to 30 billion dirhams (\$8.17 billion).

"The improvement in economic conditions in 1996 is expected to continue through this year. We expect good growth rates to be achieved again," the study said.

Qatar reaps oil bonanza

DOHA (AFP) — A sudden surge in oil output is helping ease Qatar's cash flow problems until it starts reaping the rewards from liquefied natural gas (LNG) production, economists and bankers said.

The oil bonanza will reduce the Gulf state's deficit accumulated from borrowing heavily from international banks to develop its off-shore North Field, the world's largest proven reserves of LNG.

The Arab Gulf state's oil production rose from 390,000 barrels per day (bpd) in 1995 to 470,000 bpd in March 1996 and will reach "a little bit over 500,000 barrels per day" at the end of 1996, the emir's economic advisor Ibrahim Boutros Ibrahim said.

Qatar seeks to boost oil output to 700,000 bpd by the year 2000.

Oil industry executives said the Qatar General Petroleum Company has boosted its own production by raising capacity at the on-shore Dukhan field to 280,000 bpd, with 100,000 bpd more from two off-shore fields.

The U.S. company Occidental raised its off-shore production at the Idd Al-Shargi field from 20,000 bpd in 1994 to 70,000 bpd last year.

The Danish firm Maersk boosted production at the Al-Sabreen field from 25,000 bpd to 40,000 to 50,000 bpd in three years.

By early 1997, the U.S. firm Arco will produce 30,000 bpd at Al-Rayan and Elf Aquitaine of France is to

start pumping oil from the Al-Khaleej field with a similar output target.

The simultaneous rise in the price of oil, which has hit around \$22 per barrel, provides an unexpected windfall as the 1996-97 budget unveiled in April was based on a price of \$15.5 per barrel, the banker said.

The additional revenue should reduce the projected deficit of \$960 million or maybe even eliminate it, the banker said.

"My estimate is that in 1996 there will be no deficit, which doesn't mean we won't have one this year," said Mr. Ibrahim, who is an advisor to the emir, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al

Thani.

The priority remains to put public finances back in order through cutting spending in order to balance the budget permanently over the next two or three years while waiting for the gas revenues, the emir's advisor said.

Qatar Liquefied Gas Company (Qatargas) plans to export its first shipment of LNG to Japan in December, and to produce six million tonnes a year by 2001.

Ras Laffan Liquefied Natural Gas Co. (Rasgas) is expected to begin producing 2.4 million tonnes of LNG a year in 1999 for export to South Korea.

Revenue from the LNG exports will be used for a

long period to pay off debts owed to international banks to develop the North Field, whose gas reserves are estimated at 10 trillion cubic metres (350 trillion cubic feet).

The oil revenues will help Qatar make ends meet, the banker said.

A diplomat added: "That's bound to increase the cash flow and it's going to have a real impact on the economy."

"The payment record is going to improve drastically. There are instructions filtering (out) that payments should not exceed one or two days. Delays now stand at six months to a year," he added.

REUTERS

REUTERS

The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NHS	FRF
US Dollar	1.0000	1.5650	0.5928	1.3590	116.45	1.3688	1536.00	1.7544	5.2920
DE Mark	0.6390	1.0000	0.3755	0.8822	74.41	0.8751	992.43	1.1210	3.3613
GB Sterling	1.6870	2.5383	1.0000	2.2884	196.80	2.3110	2594.61	2.9597	6.9276
CHF Franc	0.7358	1.1512	0.4358	1.0000	83.48	1.0076	1151.30	1.2812	3.6826
JP Yen	0.0084	0.0132	0.0051	0.0125	1.0000	0.0094	115.13	0.1351	3.7037
CAD Dollar	0.7309	1.1408	0.4309	0.9704	1.18	1.0000	1121.87	1.2807	3.6558
IT Lira	0.0007	0.0011	0.0004	0.0009	132.24	0.8901	1.0000	1.14	3.4386
NL Guilder	0.3700	0.5717	0.3376	0.7745	66.34	0.7805	876.30	1.0000	3.0152
FR Franc	0.1890	0.2856	0.1119	0.2570	21.69	0.2588	33.14	33.1400	1.0000

Energy		
Oil	Last	Previous
Brent	24.95	25.05
WTI	25.50	25.50
Bony	24.85	25.05
Dubai	22.00	22.70
UL Gas	211.00	213.00

Mid-East Currencies					
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY
SA Riyal	0.2867	0.4174	0.15807	0.36253	31.0791
AE Dirham	0.2723	0.42626	0.1614	0.37016	31.7339
KW Dinar	3.3317	5.21548	1.97472	4.52899	388.35
BR Dinar	0.3770	0.57282	0.22233	0.50622	309.116
CY Pound	2.1141	3.3086	1.2526	2.8731	246.167

Metal Prices		
Metal	Bid	Offer
Gold (ozs)	361.4	361.9
Silver (ozs)	4.87	4.88
Platinum (ozs)	363.4	364.4
AE (3 Months)	1562	1565
CU (3 Months)	2192	2197
Lead (3 Months)	1050	1055
Lead (3 Months)	700	705
NI (3 Months)	6500	6530

Currency Deposit Rates (Bid)					
Period	1	3	6	9	12
Cncy	Month	Months	Months	Months	Year
USD	5.37	5.43	5.53	5.62	5.75
GBP	8.12	8.26	8.38	8.51	8.66
JPY	0.25	0.25	0.31	0.38	0.47
DEM	3.02	3.07	3.15	3.23	3.30
FRF	3.27	3.30	3.36	3.40	3.48
CHF	3.36	3.37	3.42	3.45	3.51
ITL	7.44	7.12	6.80	6.60	6.51

Main Equity Indices							
Source	Index	Value	Chng	% Chng	High	Low	Pt Ch
New York	DOW JONES	8544.00	101.6	1.58	8545.63	8443.65	8442.49
New York	S&P 500	748.03	11.02	1.5	748.24	737.01	737.91
London	FTSE 100	4089.5	32.1	0.79	4089.5	4088.2	4057.4
Tokyo	NIKKEI 225	29381.35	7.89	0.04	29381.35	19108.5	19369
Paris	CAC 40	2282.78	25.79	1.14	2285.49	2258.48	2256.97
Frankfurt	DAX	2288.28	30.51	0.37	2289.3	2240.52	2246.72

Energy		
Commodity	Last	Delivery
Coffee (c/lbs)	121	Spot
Cocoa (c/lbs)	121	Spot
Sugar (c/lbs)	314.9	Spot
Soybean (c/lbs)	126	Spot
Soy (c/lbs)	21.61	Spot
Wheat (c/lbs)	125	Spot
Barley (c/lbs)	21	Spot
Rice (c/lbs)	470	Spot

JOD Cross Rates		
Currency	Buy	Sell
US Dollar	0.706	0.710
GB Sterling	1.1933	1.1963
DE Mark	0.4514	0.4537
CHF Franc	0.6293	0.6323
FR Franc	0.1336	0.1343
JP Yen	0.0071	0.0101
NL Guilder	0.402	0.404
IT Lira	0.4597	0.462

* Source: Central Bank of Jordan.

Red tape slows Moroccan industry against rivals

RABAT (R) — More than 100 company chief executives saw bureaucracy as the main curb in 1996 to Morocco's competitive development against 17 rivals, ranging from South Africa to India, Poland to Turkey, a report said.

The official report was drawn up by the Observatory for International Competitiveness of the Moroccan Economy.

Morocco falls in the lower half of the countries achieving "intermediate results" in five of seven classifications made by the observatory, set up in 1994 with help from the World Bank.

In a table giving constraints on industrial development, the observatory cited in first place the weight of administrative

procedures, followed by the difficulties in assessing legal status, the high costs of finance and taxes, weakness of infrastructure and uncertainty over economic policy.

In 1995, high taxes were seen as the main constraint, with bureaucracy coming in fourth place.

It found Malaysia and Thailand achieving "good results" in "macro-economic dynamism", followed by Indonesia and Chile in the top half of those achieving "average results" while Morocco was in the lower rung of the average results sector.

In the sector "financial dynamism", Morocco fell in the same lower-average range.

"This is due mainly to the

cost of credit which for 1996, in real terms, was six per cent", and the weight of foreign debt — 63 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP), and a 34 per cent debt-service ratio.

For "market dynamism", Morocco again came in the lower level of average results, mainly through low private consumption, with the latest figures, 1994, given as \$811 per capita.

Taxes on trade, given as 7.7 per cent of GDP in 1994, were also high when compared to the 17 other countries, seen in the survey as competitors or with strongly expanding economies.

It said however that taxes on Moroccan companies were among the lowest.

For external trade, the observatory said, Morocco had moved from being classed as having "weak results" in 1995, to join South Africa, Indonesia, Hungary and Brazil as lower-average achievers in 1996.

"This results mainly from the fall in other countries' results, rather than improved performance by Morocco," it said.

In technology and human resources, Morocco was among the weakest achievers of the 18 nations. The report cited complaints on the quality of qualified labour and illiteracy among women of around 70 per cent in 1995, despite high spending on education.

Morocco's infrastructure — the seventh factor taken into account in drawing up its competitive status — put it with Hungary, Poland and Thailand in the lower half of the "average results" section, with only South Africa achieving "good results".

THE Daily Crossword

ACROSS

- Epoch
- Complain
- trifling
- Essential
- Fledgling sound
- Draft
- classification
- Where the action is
- Land of leprechauns
- impassé
- (deadlocked)
- Sailors
- Certain flowers
- Dine
- Upper house
- Metallic sound
- QED word
- Ruddy
- Floats
- Branches
- Dark area on the moon
- Bitter herb
- Stranger
- To — (unanimously)
- Mountain lake
- Blank
- Beginning
- Nap
- Duck
- Defeats
- Most modern
- New Guinea seaport
- "The —" (Heilman opus)
- Muslim decree
- Stadium noise
- Pockel bread
- Second showing
- Landed
- Winglike
- Property
- Places
- Alphabet ending

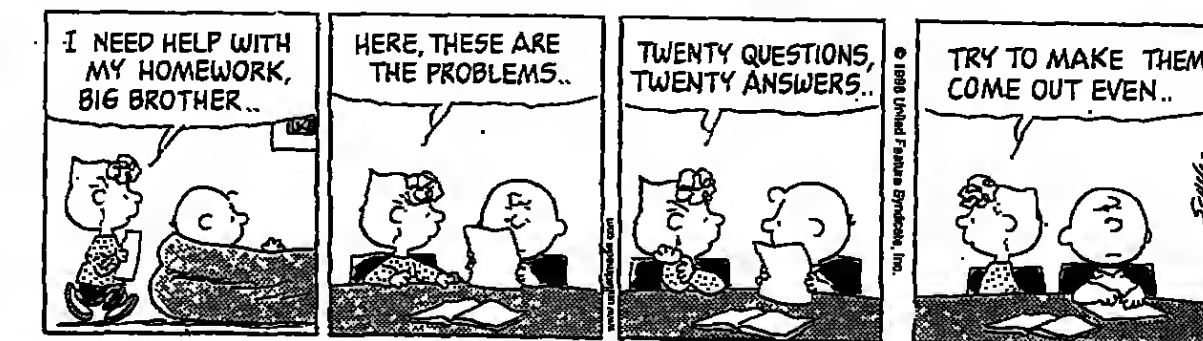
by Florence C. Adler

DOWN

- Out of this world
- Rule
- Breathing problem
- Certain ship
- Not in favor of
- Genuine
- Hysteria
- Servant
- A Gershwin
- Wires
- Rectangular column
- Endure
- Carresses
- Map designations: abbr.
- Small and brightly
- "— is an island..."
- A Guthrie
- Defile
- Dies —
- Nick
- Exclamation
- Jai —
- Ancestors
- Uplight
- Apportion
- Famous violin maker
- Norwegian King
- Aptitude
- Warns
- Thong
- Gemstone
- Deport
- Bristles
- Depot
- Italian coin
- God of war
- Balsam of Peru
- Cafe au —
- Owed at this time

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Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR MONDAY JANUARY 6, 1997

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Your career activities day starts out well, however later you may meet with annoyances which you had not intended to confront, so make the best of a bad situation. Take it in stride and proceed to your next project.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Show your mate today that you are devoted to him or her this morning, by doing some special activity which will be quite appreciated. This is not a good day or evening to get into expensive recreations so be thrifty.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Rid yourself of troublesome affairs at home today and you can make your home more comfortable. If you have guests in later this evening, show consideration for them and make them feel welcome, so that they will return.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Handle your correspondence wisely today and answer letters which are most important to your career activities first. Later this evening you can discuss any business activities with fellow associates and come up with a plan of action.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) This is not a good day today to make any repairs needed on your property, so you should put them off until a more opportune period. Study brochures in the evening for good ideas concerning your career activities.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) You have an excellent idea in the morning today which can gain you some cherished stuff, so follow through with your plans. You should not rely upon a friend yet to give you ideas for any projects until a better time.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) You may find it difficult to accomplish anything today, however it is only because you are taking on too much at once and you can slow down your pace. Later this evening would be a good time to go out on the town with mate.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Be more self-dependent, since others may not be as helpful as you wish and you could always use some assistance. Enjoy a simple hobby and you can relax for the days ahead without feeling pressured by career activities.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Be most wise in handling all career and public matters today so that you can be successful in your endeavors. Be safe, not sorry so that you will not experience any difficulties and gain the respect of those in authority.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Carry through with a course of action already put in operation today, even though you want to make changes with those procedures. Later this evening will be good for you to complete any project which has been put on hold.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Do not disagree over a bill or a statement today, since it will only make a difficult situation only worse. Don't pick a fight with your mate over something small or you could find yourself in the dog house for some time.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) You should not have that long conversation with a fellow associate today which could lead to any difficult situation. Try to please an ally later this evening, since in the days ahead you might need to seek out his or her advice.

Birthstone of January: Garnet — Rose Quartz.

Shair sees increased foreign capital entering the stock exchange this year

Trading at AFM plunges by 40.7%; price index also drops in '96

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Trading dipped by 40 per cent and prices shed nearly four per cent at the stock market in 1996, the annual report of the bourse showed Sunday.

Wahib Shair, director-general of the Amman Financial Market (AFM), attributed the decline largely to the political uncertainties surrounding the Middle

East peace process.

However, Mr. Shair told a press conference where he released the annual AFM report, prospects look better for 1997, particularly in terms of foreign capital entering the stock market.

"We are expecting increased foreign capital entering the market during 1997," he said, adding dozens of new foreign investors were licensed to enter the bourse in 1996

and many applications were awaiting government approval.

"Most of the newcomers were pension funds and investment houses from Europe and the U.S.," said Jamil Tariq, deputy chief of the AFM. "But we also saw an increasing interest from investors from the Far East, mainly Japanese," Mr. Tariq told reporters.

In general, Mr. Shair said, "the political uncertainties of the peace process depressed the market for a good part of 1996."

Investors preferred to keep a low profile and kept

their capital and holdings largely to themselves during the year," he added.

Another depressing factor was high interest rates. Mr. Shair acknowledged that it did have an adverse impact on the market, but noted that "it is the right of the Central Bank to adopt whatever action is necessary to maintain the stability of the country's currency."

Mr. Shair noted that moves were intensified in 1996 to modernise the operations of the stock market. Under a French grant, the market is on the way to be

fully automated before mid-1998, he said.

"We are also involved in a continued process of benefiting from the experiences and modern technologies employed by other markets in the world, particularly the London Stock Exchange," he told the press conference.

The AFM's annual report showed that trading during the year was 282.6 million dinars, down 40.7 per cent from the 1995 volume of 478.9 million dinars.

The peak year at the AFM, which was set up in 1978, was 1993, when shares worth 968 million dinars changed hands, with the AFM official price index shooting up by nearly 20 per cent.

The AFM index, based on 60 major companies and weighted at market value, closed for 1996 at 153.5 points, down 5.7 points or 3.6 per cent from the year's opening of 159.2 points, the report showed.

In sectoral terms, shares of commercial banks and financial institutions gained three per cent during the year. Industrial, service and insurance firms all dipped by nearly 10 per cent each during the year, the AFM report showed.

Industrials topped trading in 1996 with a turnover of 111.35 million dinars, followed by commercial banks and financial institutions with 83 million dinars, service sector firms with 51.02 million dinars (\$71.93 mil-

lion) and insurance companies with 3.1 million dinars.

According to Mr. Shair, 15 new companies were included in the market's trading list, raising the total to 135 at the end of 1996.

Total equity of the listed companies stood at 3.46 billion dinars at the end of 1996, compared with 3.49 billion dinars at the end of the previous year.

Total number of subscribed shares rose of 917 million in 1996 from 835 million in 1995.

Average rate of return in 1996 on stocks based on market value was 17.45 per cent, largely unchanged from the previous year, preliminary figures showed.

At the primary market, the volume of new shares

and bonds issued in 1996 was JD206.7 million compared to JD355.8 million in 1995.

Mr. Shair, who took over as AFM chief in October succeeding Omayya Toukan, said the market appeared to be reacting positively to the partial return of Iraq to the international oil market under its oil-for-food deal with the United Nations.

"Investors seem to have found new enthusiasm (in dealing at the AFM) in the wake of the oil-for-food deal," said Mr. Shair, in an implicit reference to hopes that Jordanian businesses, including dozens listed in the bourse, stood to benefit from exporting to Iraq.

Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic press

Khalaf: Social safety package will be ready by end of March; implementation to start mid-1997

**** THE FINAL** designs of the components of the social safety package will be ready by the end of March and the implementation of this package will start by mid 1997, Planning Minister Rima Khalaf said. She indicated that the Ministry of Planning has actually started intensive contacts with the financing parties and has reached a preliminary agreement with Germany to convert 40 million Deutschmarks of Jordan debt to a grant to finance some of the package's projects.

Dr. Khalaf clarified that the social safety package was not only to continue the policies of previous governments in remedying the problems of poverty and unemployment but also to eliminate the causes of those ills over the medium and long-term. She emphasised that preparing the components of the package was not an easy task noting that the social safety package was necessary to balance the economic adjustment programme.

The minister said that the work on preparing the components of the package has started last September in coordination with the concerned institutions in the Kingdom and some financiers to determine their willingness in financing the project of the package. Dr. Khalaf outlined the components of the package to be:

1) Raising the minimum level of per capita consumption.

This component was not seen by the minister as requiring major efforts, as although the percentage of poverty in the Kingdom was between 15 to 20 per cent, "the gap is not wide." She explained that if the minimum per capita consumption amounts to JD200 per year, the average consumption of the poor is less than this figure and this is the gap that should be eliminated.

Dr. Khalaf saw no way to achieve this target except through giving direct aid through the National Aid Fund which, she pointed out, needs restructuring especially after finding out that some of the fund's current policies do not encourage the beneficiaries to seek work.

2) Establishing and improving the infrastructure in the poor areas of the country.

3) Training and rehabilitating the unemployed and especially those who are poor.

4) Raising the income level of poor families, through self-employment, to set up small income-generating projects (AJ Aswaq).

BIS: International bank lending booms

BASEL, Switzerland (AFP) — International leading by banks from leading countries boomed by a record seven per cent in the first half of 1996, the Bank for International Settlements (BIS) reported Monday.

And lending to the non-banking private sector had reached a record amount of 42 per cent of the total, the BIS, known as the central bankers' central bank, said.

European banks were leading the way in the developing world and were increasing their advantage over Japanese and U.S. banks in Asia and in Latin America.

Banks declaring data to the BIS had lent \$20.6 billion, which represented an increase of \$60.7 billion.

These banks are in the so-called Group of 10 leading industrialised countries, and in Austria, Denmark, Spain, Finland, Ireland, Luxembourg and Norway.

The BIS reported that during the first half, lending to interests in countries outside this zone had reached an unprecedented figure.

Banks extended credit at a record amount in Asia, had lent at a continuing substantial rate to Latin America and to eastern Europe, and had increased lending substantially to smaller developed countries.

The BIS also reported that short-term lending continued to dominate credit activities and that banks were increasing purchases of paper issued by agents in various regions.

The bank analyzed the banks' respective shares by geographical origin on the basis of information supplied by central banks reporting on banks' consolidated claims on various countries.

The report said that "an important feature of the first

half of 1996 was the extent of European banks' involvement in the developing world, not only in Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa, but also in Asia."

"While most of the major European banking groups raised their exposure to Latin American in the first half of the year (U.K. banks being the main exception), Spanish banks ranked first in terms of new lending," the BIS indicated.

"European banks also extended their recent lead over Japanese banks in the Asian region. Indeed, all of the reporting European banking groups increased their exposure to Asian countries in the first half of 1996," the report said.

"This increased presence in Asia can be related not only to the liberalisation of local financial markets and the dynamism of the region, but also to the limited scope for expansion within western Europe and the perceived difficulties in trying to access the U.S. market," the bank explained.

The report said: "Lending by North American banks to outside-area countries also expanded in the first half of 1996, albeit at a more modest pace than in the case of the European banks. Almost 50 per cent of the new claims of North American banks were booked in the developing countries of Asia."

"Of note was the continuing progressive return of U.S. banks to the eastern and central European markets, following an almost complete retrenchment up to 1992. In contrast, the extension of credit by Japanese banks to outside-area countries came to a virtual standstill," the BIS concluded.

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET													
HOUSING BANK CENTER - JORDAN - SHARAFI													
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SUNDAY 05/01/1997													
PAST 12 MONTHS	STOCK	COMPANY'S NAME	P / E	DIV.	NO. OF TRANS.	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED JD	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE			
259.500	205.000	ARAB BANK	13.7	1.39	11	1360	345480	249.00	251.00	2.00+			
5.500	4.250	CAIRO ARABIAN BANK	10.7	2.88	1	100	520	5.15	5.20	0.05+			
1.230	0.880	MID. EAST INV. BK.	73.6	0.00	52	66700	74095	1.10	1.12	0.02+			
2.700	2.120	INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK.	5.0	0.33	3	250125	547774	2.18	2.20	0.02+			
5.250	4.250	THE HOUSING BK.	12.8	2.88	4	14936	71480	4.75	4.79	0.04+			
2.950	2.440	JOR. KWANAT BANK	18.9	0.00	9	910	2375	2.75	2.75	0.00			
1.090	0.880	JOR. GULF BANK	7.3	7.22	6	6400	6199	0.97	0.97	0.00			
4.180	3.480	JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	17.6	0.00	4	1555	5707	3.67	3.67	0.00			
3.210	1.760	BEIT AL-MAL (BEITRA)	1.1	8.67	2	250	433	1.76	1.73	0.03-			
1.480	1.000	PHILADEL. INV. BK.	9	0.00	4	1100	1436	1.32	1.31	0.01-			
BANK SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 192.68 %CHG: +0.58 96 343436 1055496													
2.830	1.830	JOR. FRENCH INSUR.	5.4	10.53	7	1050	2006	1.96	1.90	0.06-			
INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 120.52 %CHG: -0.30 7 1050 2006													
1.830	1.450	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	11.3	7.36	8	4038	6616	1.64	1.63	0.01-			
1.560	1.250	IRBIO ELECTRICITY	9.6	6.85	1	50	73	1.46	1.46	0.00			
2.800	2.090	SHIPPING LINES	10.9	7.15	1	250	645	2.65	2.15	0.50-			
1.780	1.080	NATL. PORTFOLIO	9	0.00	16	4300	5125	1.19	1.19	0.00			
1.150	0.980	JORDAN INTL. TRAD.	33.4	0.00	3	650	423	0.68	0.68	0.00			
1.250	0.940	ZARQA EDUCATION	9	0.00	6	1650	1730	1.04	1.04	0.00			
2.310	1.690	UNIFIED CO.	11.1	4.74	28	8500	18061	2.12	2.11	0.01-			
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 114.93 %CHG: -0.39 63 19438 32671													
3.730	3.060	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	19.3	2.97	33	42704	143945	3.35	3.37	0.02+			
3.900	2.710	JOR. PHOSPHATE MINES	34.1	0.00	1	200	534	3.32	3.32	0.00			
10.400	8.720	JOR. PETROL. REFINERY	9.8	8.25	10	888	8620	9.58	9.70	0.12+			
1.590	1.150	NOCLEN INDUSTRIES	55.5	0.00	1	60	125	1.35	1.35	0.00			
7.950	6.420	JOR. WASTE MILLS	8.7	3.68	1	100	680	7.15	6.80	0.35-			
4.730	3.070	ARAB PHARM. MANF.	19.7	5.59	10	5450	19615	3.62	3.58	0.04-			
6.450	5.650	JOR. CERAMIC IND.	7.3	7.24	3	735	728	5.95	5.90	0.05-			
2.360	1.500	JOR. PIPES MANFCT.	9.1	7.27	4	1100	1915	1.65	1.65	0.00			
7.700	4.250	OAR ALADWA OV. INV.	13.4	4.08	2	850	4165	4.95	4.90	0.05-			
5.800	3.130	ARAB ALUM. IND.	9.1	8.22	4	1000	1650	3.66	3.65	0.01-			
1.690	0.930	INTERMED. PETRO. CHEM.	9	0.00	76	11050	69715	0.62	0.63	0.01+			
1.440	1.060	ARAB PAPER CONV. TRD.	8.1	8.72	33	14250	16738	1.15	1.19	0.04+			
1.050	0.540	NATIONAL INDS.	10.1	8.82	27	21250	14568	0.72	0.68	0.04-			
1.690	0.930	INTERMED. PETRO. CHEM.	9	0.00	33	12500	13115	1.02	1.10	0.02+			
3.250	2.280	UNIV. CHEM. INDS.	77.5	0.00	1	150	440	2.93	2.93	0.00			
3.830	2.130	NATL. CABLE WIRE. MANF.	18.8	0.00	8	1080	2772	2.61	2.61	0.00			
1.780	1.080	ARAB PHARM. CHEM.	27.0	0.00	4	1323	19254	1.40	1.40	0.00			
3.250	1.440	UNIV. HOOD. INDS.	5.3	11.43	3	800	1430	1.78	1.75	0.03-			
2.000	1.140	JOR. INDS. RESOURCES	18.3	0.00	17	10433	13565	1.31	1.40	0.09+			
1.420	0.840	JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	25.5	0.00	44	26500	25211	0.95	0.94	0.01-			
2.450	1.750	EL. & SV. REPAIR WER.	9	0.00	9	11710	22362	1.91	2.91	0.00			
1.390	1.080	INTL. TOBACCO	30.8	0.00	13	5500	7173	1.30	1.31	0.01+			
1.600	0.930	UNION CB. & VED.	23.9	0.00	2	1100	1087	1.00	0.97	0.03-			
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 114.09 %CHG: +0.63 373 281622 392024													
GRAND TOTAL INDEX: 151.65 %CHG: +0.03 519 645546 1482199													
PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SUNDAY 05/01/1997													
7.740	4.400	CENTRAL GEN. STORAGE	21.3	0.00	1	400	318	0.53	0.53	0.00			
8.900	5.000	JOR. TRADE FNC.	14.1	0.00	13	9500	4985	0.52	0.53	0.01+			
8.900	5.000	UNION INV. 504	69.8	0.00	4	6000	1380	0.73	0.73	0.00			
1.020	0.370	ARAB FIN. INVEST.	9.9	0.00	30	33850	15228	0.44	0.45	0.01+			
1.020	0.370	AL-OHAYAT 752	15.5	0.00	5	611	266	0.67	0.67	0.00			
8.900	5.000	ARAB FOOD & MED.	8	0.00	4	1500	900	0.60	0.60	0.00			
1.730	1.300	NATL. CHLORINE	8	0.00	2	500	684	1.34	1.37	0.03+			
6.990	4.450	ARAB INTL. INV. TRD.	9	0.00	22	45100	23783	0.50	0.53	0.03+			
9.940	5.200	NATL. TEXTILE	8	0.00	3	1250	713	0.57	0.57	0.00			
1.000	0.400	NATL. MULT. ENG. MANICO	8	0.00	19	24850	12152	0.47	0.49	0.02+			
7.760	4.300	NATZAK DIBS & HOULDS	8	0.00	3	1200	631	0.50	0.53	0.03+			
7.720	4.300	JORDAN TEXT.	8	0.00	7	2481	1235	0.67	0.76	0.09+			
8.900	5.700	RAZI PHARM. 651	8	0.00	9	4000	1000	0.58	0.50	0.02+			
8.910	390	INDS. ENG.	26.5	0.00	13	16800	7224	0.42	0.43	0.01+			
1.180	0.760	AL-OHAYAT 752 CERAMIC	8	0.00	2	4000	2481	0.78	0.78	0.00			
8.990	3600	1. TEXTILE MANUP.	9	0.00	1	150	71	0.49	0.47	0.02-			
1.020	0.800	ARAB INT. FOOD FACT.	70.2	0.00	4	16000	16000	1.02	1.00	0.02-			
1.500	0.530	MIO. EAST INV. BK.	5.1	0.00	49	100500	84848	0.68	0.69	0.01+			
GRAND TOTAL 188 269636 159431													

Hawks swamp Knicks 88-71; Kinsella strike stuns Newcastle

Pistons embarrass Raptors

ATLANTA (R) — Henry James scored 19 points to lead a balanced attack as the Atlanta Hawks won their 11th straight home game, an 88-71 rout of the New York Knicks on Saturday.

Steve Smith added 18 points and Christian Laettner 17 for Atlanta, which has won 13 of its last 18 games.

Patrick Ewing scored 16 points and Allan Houston and John Starks added nine apiece for New York, which has lost five of its last seven games.

"I was just taking advantage of open shots," said James. "The guys hit me. I just thought we put a lot of pressure on them in making them do different things."

In Detroit, Michael Curry scored 15 of his career-high 17 points in the first half as the Detroit Pistons raced to a 22-point lead and routed the Toronto Raptors, 118-74, for their fourth consecutive victory.

The 44-point margin of victory was the Pistons' second-largest ever, trailing only their 46-point rout of the Indiana Pacers in 1987.

"I told my guys remember how you got beat," Raptors coach Darrell Walker said. "Don't let it go out of your mind. This was a tough and embarrassing loss but we'll be fine."

In Charlotte, Rod Strickland scored 28 points and Tracy Murray had eight of his 20 in a 19-0 burst as the Washington Bullets limited the Charlotte Hornets to seven third-quarter points on the way to a 104-93 victory.

Juwan Howard added 17 points and seven rebounds and George Muesan had 15 points and 14 boards for Washington, which erased a one-point deficit and forced an 18-point lead by outscoring Charlotte 28-7 in the third period.

"Tonight the defence won the game for us," Howard said.

In Cleveland, Terrell Brandon scored nine of his 32 points in a first-quarter run as the Cleveland Cavaliers took early control and cruised to their eighth straight home win, 99-91 over the Indiana Pacers.

Chris Mills added 20



Detroit Pistons' Grant Hill (right) fouls Toronto Raptors' Carlos Rogers while trying to reject Rogers' slam attempt during first period NBA play on Saturday at the Palace in Auburn Hills (Reuters photo)

points and 10 rebounds for the Cavaliers, who never trailed after the first four minutes and led by as many as 19 points.

Reggie Miller scored 20 points and Dale Davis 18 for the Pacers.

In Dallas, Arvydas Sabonis scored a career-high 33 points and grabbed 12 rebounds to lead the Portland Trail Blazers to their fourth straight victory, 110-104 over the Dallas Mavericks.

The seven-foot Sabonis shot 11-for-13 (85 per cent) from the field, including 3-for-3 from three-point range. Kenny Anderson had 25 points, 11 assists and eight rebounds for Portland.

In Houston, Darrick Martin scored 20 points, including the tie-breaking free throws with 1:16 remaining, as the Los Angeles Clippers rallied for a rare 95-91 victory over the slumping Houston Rockets.

Loy Vaught had 20 points and 11 rebounds for the Clippers, who held the Rockets scoreless over the final 2:01 and beat Houston for just the second time in the last 17 meetings.

Hakeem Olajuwon totalled 25 points and 10 rebounds and Charles Barkley added 23 and 13 for the Rockets.

In Milwaukee, Tom Gugliotta scored seven of his 25 points in the fourth

quarter and the Minnesota Timberwolves limited Milwaukee to 22 per cent shooting in the final period on the way to their sixth win in seven games, 97-91 over the Bucks.

Kevin Garnett scored 22 points and grabbed 13 rebounds for Minnesota.

At Utah, Karl Malone scored 28 points and Bryon Russell made a key steal and free throw in the final 18 seconds as the Utah Jazz ended the Miami Heat's 14-game road winning streak with an 83-80 victory.

Malone also grabbed 12 rebounds. Jeff Hornacek scored 13 points. Russell added 11 and John Stockton handed out 11 assists for Utah.

LONDON (AFP) — Mark Kinsella ruined Robert Lee's homecoming with a stunning late equaliser that earned Charlton Athletic an FA Cup replay with Premiership giants Newcastle at the Valley on Sunday.

Newcastle were on course for a place in the fourth round after England midfielder Lee had fired them into a first-half lead. But 11 minutes from time, Kinsella burst from midfield and unleashed a ferocious drive from 25 metres which flew into the top right hand corner of Shaka Hislop's goal.

The First Division side fully deserved their equaliser

after matching their multi-million pound visitors for commitment and enterprise in the freezing conditions.

But it was an unhappy end to an emotional day for Lee on his return to the club where he spent ten years before being sold to Newcastle in 1992 for £700,000. The cash allowed Charlton to return to their famous ground.

It was his first trip back to the South London club and after 32 minutes Lee, who dominated a fiercely competitive game in the first half, was celebrating the breakthrough.

Lee Clark centred from

the right for England captain Alan Shearer to head down for the unmarked Lee to poke the ball past Andy Petterson from eight metres at the second attempt.

And just before the break Lee came close to grabbing a second with a powerful drive that grazed the outside of the post after a surging run to the edge of the box.

But Charlton were furious as they went in at the interval after the referee David Allison opted not to award them a penalty two minutes before Lee struck.

England under-21 man Shaun Newton rounded Newcastle left-back John Beresford only to be hauled

back by his shirt as he tried to get on to the loose ball.

Goalscorer Kinsella said: "We got what we deserved for our second half performance. We showed them far too much respect in the first when to be fair, they could have scored three or four more. 'Now we are just looking forward to going up to a full house at Newcastle and maybe spring a surprise up there.'"

Lee said his former club thoroughly deserved their draw.

"Charlton played really well in the second half and all credit to them for getting the replay," said Lee.

Top Arab soccer player dies after match

TUNIS (AP) — Champion Tunisian soccer player, Medi Ben Rekhis, died of a heart attack after a friendly weekend match with a French team, the official news agency TAP reported Sunday. He was 26.

Ben Rekhis, voted best Arab soccer player in 1995, collapsed shortly after the Saturday night match between his team, Esperance Tunis, and Olympique Lyonnais at Tunis' Zouiten Stadium.

Efforts to revive him, first at the stadium then at a nearby hospital, failed, according to TAP, which quoted informed medical sources. They said he died of a

heart attack, but gave no further information.

Ben Rekhis, who was not married, was considered a pillar of Tunisian soccer. The multi-talented defender for Esperance also could be used offensively as a striker.

Ben Rekhis accumulated numerous awards in his illustrious career with his club that included national, Arab and African Cup titles. Among them were the Super Cup of Africa, the Arab Super Cup and the Cup of Afro-Asiatic Clubs.

Leeds reject plea by Brolin

LEEDS, England (AFP) — Tomas Brolin will remain in the football wilderness after Leeds United rejected a request to train with his former club Parma on Sunday.

Leeds have told the Serie-A side that they must table an offer if they want the Swedish international striker, who is in breach of contract by staying away from the Premiership club.

Leeds chairman, Bill Fotherby Fotherby said: "If he wants to train he should do so with us because he is a Leeds United player and we hold his registration."

"I have told Parma that if they want him they should make an offer and we will talk."

Brolin cost Leeds £4.5 million (about \$7 million) from Parma in November 1995 but fell out with manager Howard Wilkinson and has since ignored pleas from Wilkinson's successor George Graham to return.

Sick Nigerian coach takes seven players to Kenya

LAGOS (R) — Nigeria's coach Amodu Shaibu had a squad of just seven players with him when he left for Nairobi on Saturday to begin preparations for a vital World Cup qualifier against Kenya on Jan. 11.

But Shaibu, himself sick with Gastroenteritis, said he expected to have his full squad of 19 in camp by Wednesday.

"Some players are staying behind due to personal problems while others are still

playing for clubs abroad, only promising to join us in Kenya," he explained at the airport. "They didn't report to camp on Dec. 28 as I'd planned and when a few did later, the Nigeria Football Association (NFA) had not made lodging arrangements."

"I am still suffering from gastroenteritis and very unhappy that we couldn't commence training here before heading for Kenya," Shaibu said.

"I have now shifted my camp to Kenya where we will start training on Monday. I should have my full squad of 19 players by Wednesday and everything will be all right."

Local newspaper reports said the NFA could not secure hotel accommodation for the players because it was in debt to several Lagos hotels.

The match is vital for the reigning Olympic champions, who are second behind Guinea in their group on goal difference with only one team to qualify from the group.

office in Los Angeles on Dec. 3. Johnson was last month given government permission to come to Indonesia for two exhibition matches on Jan. 8 and 9. Indonesian immigration authorities in January 1994 barred Johnson from entering the country citing their rights to bar entry to a person suffering from insanity or contagious diseases.

'Magic' Johnson receives visa to travel to Indonesia — promoter

JAKARTA (AFP) — Organisers of an exhibition tour to Indonesia by U.S. basketball star Earvin "Magic" Johnson have denied suggestions that his visa has been delayed because he was barred in 1994 because of his HIV infection, a report said Sunday. "It is not true that a visa for Magic Johnson has not been issued as reported ...

on Saturday," said the event's promoter Marcel Maulana. On Saturday, the Republik daily said Johnson's visa had been delayed, quoting immigration officials as saying they were "still co-ordinating" with related government agencies on the visa. But Maulana said Johnson and his team obtained business visas from Indonesia's representative

office in Los Angeles on Dec. 3. Johnson was last month given government permission to come to Indonesia for two exhibition matches on Jan. 8 and 9. Indonesian immigration authorities in January 1994 barred Johnson from entering the country citing their rights to bar entry to a person suffering from insanity or contagious diseases.

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(674028) after 4 p.m.

Congo national team face World Cup forfeit

BRAZZAVILLE (R) — Congo may be forced to forfeit their next World Cup qualifier because of a dispute over money owed to the African Football Confederation.

The confederation has given Congo's national federation until Jan. 10 to pay the membership arrears, estimated at 20 million CFA francs (\$38,000), or be banned from playing their Jan. 12 Africa zone match against Zaire, a government official said on Saturday. It was not immediately clear how the points within group three would be distributed. Zambia and South Africa are the other teams involved.

British Ladies Of Amman
IMPORTANT NOTICE
The only meeting for January will now be held on Tuesday 7th January At 10 a.m., at the Forte Grand Hotel.

Cars For Sale (Duty Unpaid)
1) Nissan 4-wheel-drive, model Pathfinder 1992 - JD 7,500.
2) Fiat Uno 1992 - JD 2,500.
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ANNOUNCES THE INVITATION TO TENDER NO. 3/F 97
JPMC ANNOUNCES THE INVITATION TO BID NO. 3/F97. FOR THE SUPPLY OF:-
((Flotation Reagent for Eshidiya Benefication Plant)) Qty. (1,400) metric tonnes
The tender documents are available at JPMC offices in Amman, Supply Department, until 2:00 p.m. local time Monday, 20th January, 1997. Application for documents should be accompanied by a non-refundable fee of JD (75) for each set of tender documents.
The closing date for submitting bids is 12:00 hours local time Monday, 3rd February 1997.
Sameh Madani
Managing Director

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TODAY AT	CINEMA TEL:634144	CINEMA TEL:634144	CINEMA TEL:699238	CINEMA TEL:677420	Nabil & Hisham's Theatre TEL: 625155
	PHILADELPHIA "1"	PHILADELPHIA "2"	PLAZA	CONCORD	
	A Rob Cohen film Sylvester Stallone in DAYLIGHT Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	Richard Gere, Sian Connery & Julia Ormond.....in FIRST KNIGHT Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	* The Hunchback of Notre Dame Shows: 12:00, 1:30, 5:00 * RANSOM Shows: 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	CONCORD "1" Robert Deniro & Welsly Snipes...In THE FAN Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:00, 8:15, 10:30 ***** CONCORD "2" Dumb and Dumber Shows: 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	The Theatre is closed from Dec. 15, 1996 until the start of the Holy Month of Ramadan in order to prepare for a new play entitled "Al Aman Ya Ho"

Settlers remove mobile homes

BEIT EL, occupied West Bank (R) — Jewish settlers on Sunday began removing mobile homes they had planted on a West Bank hilltop in defiance of the Israeli government, witnesses said.

They said settlers disconnected makeshift electricity and water lines from seven caravans they hauled onto a hill near Beit El settlement north of Jerusalem under the cover of darkness last Friday.

The settlers lowered Israeli flags and began towing the mobile homes down the hill under Israeli army guard.

An Israeli official said the settlers agreed to remove the caravans in exchange for a meeting with Israeli Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai to discuss the possible expansion of Beit El.

"The government of Israel will not condone unilateral acts of settlement that are not approved by the government," Dore Gold, policy adviser to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, told Reuters.

Mr. Mordechai's office said the defence minister, who must approve any expansion of settlements in Arab lands occupied by Israel, would meet Beit El settlers on Sunday.

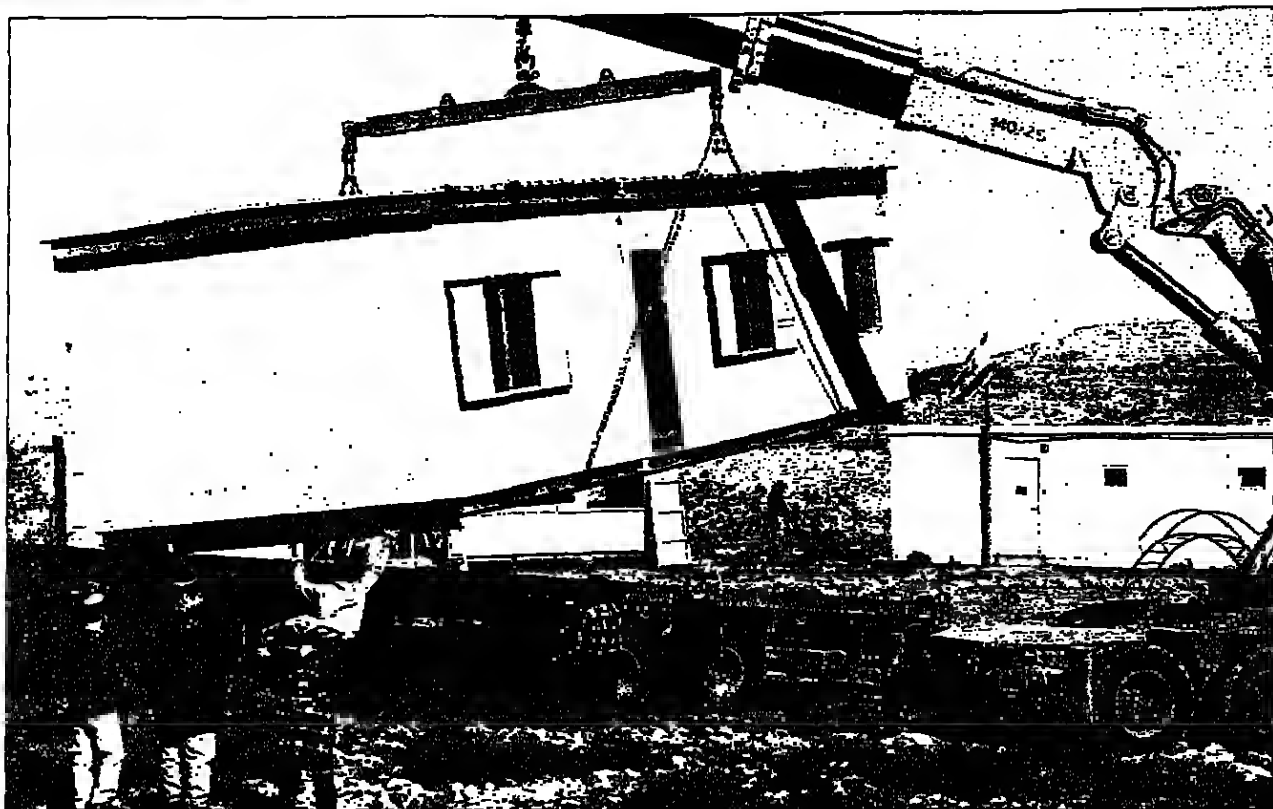
Settlers called the caravan placement a "protest action" against the government's delay in allowing them to expand Beit El. They plan the expansion as a response to the killing by Palestinians of a settler woman and her son last month.

The action infuriated Palestinians and Israeli peace activists.

Settlers feel Mr. Netanyahu has betrayed election promises to further settlement in lands they deem the biblical birthright of the Jewish people.

Since taking office in June, Mr. Netanyahu has authorised the building of some 3,000 homes in existing settlements, according to Israeli peace activist figures. He has not started any new settlements, a move Palestinians have warned would cause an explosion.

Some 140,000 Jews live in settlements scattered among more than two million Palestinians in the West Bank.



Jewish settler children watch as one of seven mobile homes is lifted on to a flatbed truck on Sunday as the mobile homes put in place last Friday are removed from a hilltop near the Beit El settlement on the occupied West Bank (Reuters photo)

Dissident Iraqi leader gives new version of Uday attack

KUWAIT (AP) — An exile Iraqi Shiite opposition leader says the attack on Saddam Hussein's eldest son was carried out by relatives of a military commander probably slain by the Iraqi regime, a newspaper reported Sunday.

The Shiite leader rejected the claim of another Iraqi exile group, the Al Dawa Party, that it carried out the assassination attempt against Uday Hussein on Dec. 12 in Baghdad, according to the Al Rai Al Am newspaper.

Abdul Majid Al Khoel, the son of the Grand Ayatollah Abul Qasim Al Khoel who was the Shiites' spiritual leader until his death in 1992, told the newspaper that the two men who attacked Uday, 32, escaped to a neighbouring Arab country he declined to identify.

He said one of the attackers was the son of Major-General Omar Al Hazzaa, who was "killed in mysterious circumstances" after the 1980-88 Iraq-Iran war, likely by "elements of the regime" in Iraq.

The exile opposition leader, who is visiting Kuwait, did not provide any details about how the attack

was carried out by the two men, who he said were from President Saddam's hometown of Tikrit.

He said President Saddam has removed several members of Al Hazzaa family from sensitive posts in the wake of the attack.

Other exile opposition sources have reported widespread arrests, including members of the security forces, the ruling party and others.

Uday, a powerful confidante of his father, has appeared on television several times saying he was recovering well from his injuries, reportedly including bullets still lodged in his body.

In a Dec. 26 letter to the U.N. secretary-general's office released Friday, Iraqi Foreign Minister Mohammed Al Sahaf accused Iran of sheltering those responsible for the attack and asked the United Nations to help force Iran to band them over. The letter noted that Al Dawa is based in Iran.

The Kuwaiti newspaper had reported Dec. 29 that two operatives from Al Dawa drove a car disguised as a security agent's close enough to Uday's car to hurl

a grenade and then rake him with machinegun fire.

Mr. Khoel said Al Dawa was not capable of carrying out such a plan. He said he did not recognise the party as the legitimate

Iraqi opposition and that the party was a "legend" created by the Iraqi leader to scare western and Arab countries, the newspaper reported Sunday.

Al Dawa, a large Islamic opposition group, has had backing from Iran. Mr. Khoel has criticised Iran for politicising the succession of the spiritual leader for the world's 100 million Shiite Muslims, now Iran's Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

Iraq's large Shiite community has tense relations with the country's ruling clique from the rival and mainstream Sunni sect. A short-lived Shiite uprising in southern Iraq was suppressed by the army in 1991.

Another Iraqi opposition group named after Mohammed Madhoun Al Dulaimi, an Iraqi air force general executed for plotting against President Saddam, also has claimed responsibility for the attack on Uday.

Egypt dismisses Israeli charges

CAIRO (AFP) — Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa has angrily dismissed Israeli charges that Egypt was encouraging the Palestinians not to sign an agreement on a handover of the West Bank city of Hebron.

The government newspaper Al Akhbar in Sunday's editions quoted Mr. Musa as saying that accusations Egypt was holding up the signing of a Hebron accord were "nonsense" and "unfounded."

"The Palestinians know very well what they should accept and when," the Egyptian foreign minister said.

He said the Israelis were "trying to justify their evasiveness and delays ... by talking about incitement on the part of Egypt."

"The obstacle to the conclusion of an agreement until now, despite the significant progress made, is the absence of proposals acceptable to the Palestinians," Mr. Musa said.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said recently that Egypt was putting pressure on the Palestinian authority of Yasser Arafat not to sign a Hebron agreement, but went on to praise Cairo's role.

Israeli newspapers, however, have continued to accuse Egypt of standing in the way of an agreement on a handover of Hebron to the Palestinians.

The Israeli military was to have withdrawn from 80 per cent of Hebron in March but the pullout was put on hold after a series of suicide bombings in Israel.

Israeli and Palestinian negotiators have been holding three months of U.S.-mediated talks but have failed so far to hammer out an agreement.

Kabariti meets team of Arab Israelis, reiterates support for Palestinians

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan on Sunday reiterated its continued support for the Palestinian people in their drive to regain their rights on their soil.

Speaking at a meeting held at the Prime Ministry with a visiting delegation representing the Islamic Movement in Israel led by Sheikh Abdullah Nimer Darwish, Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti underlined the need for continued contacts between the Arab people in Palestine and the Arab World.

He also lauded the Arab Israelis' efforts to retain and protect their Islamic and Arab identity.

Mr. Kabariti reviewed with the delegation Jordan's stand with regard to a just and durable peace. He voiced the Kingdom's keenness to help remove hurdles in the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations and subsequent negotiations on a final settlement.

Sheikh Darwish expressed appreciation of Jordan's support for the Palestinians. He told Jordan Television that he discussed the peace process and the negotiations on Israeli redeployment in Hebron.

He said his discussions with Mr. Kabariti also covered cultural contacts between Arab Israelis and the rest of the Arab World. His delegation received a positive response and understanding of the issues facing Arab Israelis from Mr. Kabariti.

Sheikh Darwish said Arab Israelis were exerting pressure through their representatives in the Knesset and through demonstrations in support of the peace process.

Sheikh Darwish said the delays in the Hebron negotiations were caused by internal issues facing Israeli

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu because certain Israeli political groups are opposing the withdrawal from Hebron.

Furthermore, he said Mr. Netanyahu was hoping to get further concessions from the Palestinians through prolonged negotiations, "but eventually he will sign the accord."

Sheikh Darwish also met the speaker of the Upper House of Parliament, Ahmad Lawzi, and discussed the peace process and the general situation in the Palestinian lands.

The Islamic delegation also met Minister of Information Marwan Muasher for a review of the peace process. Following the meeting Dr. Muasher said Jordan was ready to assume any role that would help bridge the gap between the Palestinians and Israel and will continue to back the Palestinian National Authority in its negotiations with the Jewish state.

Dr. Muasher said that Jordan was in constant touch with all the political groups in Israel, including the Islamic Movement, in the course of building a solid front in favour of a lasting peace.

The delegation from the Islamic Movement is the third Israeli team to visit Jordan since Thursday.

On Thursday, a delegation representing the opposition Labour Party and a team from the Israeli Parliament economic committee were in Amman.

His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan and Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti held talks with the two delegations.

Crown Prince Hassan met with the Arab-Israeli delegation on Friday.

Jordan hosts workshop on respect for human rights

AMMAN (Petra) — Deputising for His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, Royal Court Chief Awn Khasawneh on Sunday opened a workshop on regional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights in the Asian and Pacific regions.

The event was organised by the U.N. Human Rights Centre in cooperation with the Jordanian government.

Dr. Khasawneh told the participants from the Asia and Pacific regions that despite their earlier contributions to human civilisation these regions were still lagging behind nations in providing and ensuring human rights for their respective population.

Failure in this concern, he said, could be attributed to various reasons, including local traditions and cultural considerations. But these, he said, should not prevent the development of a strategy designed to ensure respect for human rights through regional cooperation.

All the religions and human values in the Asia and Pacific regions teach and advocate respect of human rights and respect of human dignity, he added.

Dr. Khasawneh stressed that the main responsibility for protecting human rights lies with the state but that does not prevent regional cooperation to achieve that goal and ensure peace and security for all communities.

He said that certain countries fear that regional arrangements for the protection of human rights will infringe on the sovereignty of the state. But he said, regional arrangements can help overcome any hesitation in providing protection of human rights for all people.

Attending the opening session were several ministers and Parliament members as well as representatives of non-governmental organisations.

'Alexandria palace attack foiled'

CAIRO (AP) — Security police have foiled a plot by extremists to storm a seaside presidential palace from boats and through the gates simultaneously and attack officials, a newspaper reported.

The Interior Ministry said Sunday that there had been no assault on the palace in the coastal city of Alexandria but the statement did not comment on whether the plot outlined by the London-based Al Hayat newspaper had existed.

An unidentified ministry spokesperson said during a meeting of Arab interior ministers in Tunisia that "there has never been any attack on the Muntazah" palace, according to Egypt's Middle East News Agency (MENA).

According to reports in the Saudi-owned newspaper on Saturday and Sunday, the plan called for the assailants to attack the palace from the sea in rubber boats and storm the gates at a time when the maximum number of officials were inside. Both groups of attackers would then enter the palace at the same time, the newspaper said.

The scheme allegedly was devised by Ismael Al Sheikh, who began forming a military wing of the outlawed Al Gamaa Al Islamiyah after his 1993 acquittal in a case stemming from attacks on tourists.

Sheikh was among 49 defendants tried for shooting at a busload of German tourists in late 1992, wounding five, and other attacks. Thirty-two men were convicted, with seven of them sentenced to death.

The group has undertaken a campaign of violence to oust Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak. Three members were convicted in Ethiopia of the attempted assassination of Mr. Mubarak there in 1995.

Sheikh was among those arrested in late November by Egyptian security agents, who seized explosives, arms and ammunition amassed by the militants during months of planning that started early last year, Al Hayat said.

The location, precise dates and details of the arrests were not reported.

The plotters had contact with Gamaa leaders both outside the country and imprisoned in Egypt who approved of the scheme and provide financing, the newspaper said.

The plot was ready to be implemented in April, and Sheikh was left to decide on the timing, Al Hayat said. The intended victims were not specified in the newspaper report.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Iran seeks Russian missile technology

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Iran is secretly negotiating with Russia to acquire the technology needed to manufacture SS-4 long-range missiles, the Israeli newspaper Haaretz reported Sunday. The negotiations involve the transfer of technical "know-how" and not sales of the missiles themselves, which have a range of 2,000 kilometres, reported the Independent daily's military affairs correspondent, Zeev Schiff. Iran contacted Russia to obtain the SS-4 missiles after U.S. pressure cut short its efforts to acquire Scud-C launchers from North Korea, the newspaper reported, adding that the Tehran-Moscow arms talks had prompted concern among Israeli and Saudi leaders. Russia, over strong U.S. objections, has already signed contracts to provide Iran with two nuclear reactors designed for civilian use.

Weizman ends visit to India

NEW DELHI (AFP) — Israeli President Ezer Weizman flew home Sunday after a groundbreaking visit to India that drew protests from Libya and concern in neighbouring Pakistan. The United News of India (UNI) reported, Indian officials said Mr. Weizman, the first Israeli head of state to visit India, left Bombay airport for Tel Aviv, UNI said. During his week-long visit, the 73-year-old Israeli president, who served here as a royal air force officer five decades ago, met Indian leaders and offered to sell his country's latest Kfir fighter jets to India. He also called for greater cooperation between the air forces of India and Israel and closer military ties. The two countries established diplomatic ties in January 1992 after four decades of hostility. India's arch-rival Pakistan said last week that growing military cooperation between India and Israel — two "known" nuclear states — was a cause of concern for South Asian states. Libya lodged a protest with the Indian ambassador over the trip.

Four condemned to death in Dubai

DUBAI (AFP) — A court here condemned to death an United Arab Emirates (UAE) national convicted of drug trafficking and three Indians found guilty of murder, newspapers reported Sunday. The Dubai criminal court on Saturday sentenced the UAE national after finding him guilty of possessing drug paraphernalia and 3.2 kilograms of opium. Gulf Today said. It was the first death sentence against a drug trafficker in the UAE since it adopted a new law in 1995 calling for capital punishment in narcotics cases. Gulf Today and other UAE newspapers said. The three Indians were condemned to death after they were found guilty of the premeditated murder of two companions. Gulf Today identified the three Indians by name but the UAE national was identified only by his first name and last initials. Executions in the UAE are usually carried out by firing squad.

Call for protest against Israeli fair seen ignored

By Sacha Bagdli
Special to the Jordan Times.

AMMAN — Ammanites on Sunday appeared to have largely ignored a call to raise the national flag to protest the holding of an Israeli trade exhibition in Jordan.

The call for the protest action was the latest move adopted by opponents of the Israeli trade fair, now scheduled to open on Wednesday after two postponements.

The four-day exhibition will be the first of its kind to be held in Jordan after the Kingdom and Israel signed a peace treaty in October 1994.

It has drawn fierce criticism from political activists who oppose normalisation of relations with the Jewish state as well as businessmen who argue that the time is inappropriate for such an event.

The government has adopted a neutral stand, saying the exhibition was strictly a private sector affair.

Around the capital there was little sign on Sunday of citizens taking note of the advertised appeals to "raise Jordan's flag on homes, companies, factories, stores and other buildings ... to express solidarity with national sovereignty and reject the holding of the Israeli exhibition in the Arab land of Jordan."

But the Jordanian Engineers Association (JEA), the main force behind the call for the

protest along with a self-styled "national Jordanian committee for cancelling the trade fair," insisted that there was no immediate response to the call due to a two-day delay in the opening of the exhibition.

"If the trade fair was still to convene Monday we would have seen more flags around the capital in response to the appeals we made for this action in local newspapers Sunday," said Bilal Kaisi, a JEA spokesman.

"As the trade fare has been delayed until Wednesday, we expect a delay in demonstrations by citizens," he continued.

The fair, organised by a private Jordanian firm, was initially due to open on Dec. 15, but was rescheduled to Jan. 6 and organisers said Sunday that the event will now open Jan. 8.

Reasons given by Amman residents for their indifference to the JEA call for protest action ranged from reluctance to making political statements at homes or places of work to conviction that such actions were futile.

"I am indeed angered by the recent actions of the Israeli government regarding the West Bank and I am against the trade fair and normalisation of relations with Israel at this point," said Zaki Khalil, a grocer in the Umm Uthaina area.

"But this is politics. I don't want to make such

(Continued on page 7)



'Di has new fan

LONDON (AFP) — ter to mend Princes broken heart than surgeon? So ref Sunday Mirror r which this weeker Hasnat Khan as the doctor who has c fancy of the former i Wales. "She has a spot for Hasnat and in love with him," t quotes Khan's uncle Ahmed Khan, as say feeling is apparently "If Diana really wan there's no force in the that will prevent Hasni marrying her," he added reportedly first disclos passion for Diana, divorced Britain's heir a ent Prince Charles in Au in Point de Vue, the Fre Bible for fans of aristocracy

Havel weds

PRAGUE (AFP) — Czech President Vaclav Havel, 60, married for the second time on Saturday to 43-year-old actress Dana Veskova in a quiet ceremony in Prague, his spokesman said. Popular for her numerous roles in the theatre and cinema, the actress has been divorced for many years and has a 19-year-old daughter. The couple were married in the town hall of the third district in Prague, where the new Mrs. Havel lives. Havel's first wife, Olga Splichalova, whom he married in 1964, died in January last year of cancer at the age of 62. She had been a constant support when he was wounded by the communist authorities before the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Mitterrand hat goes on display

PARIS (AFP) — Late French President Francois Mitterrand's favourite black felt hat has found a place to hang for posterity — a museum in the Upper Loire region that specialises in beadwear. Danielle Mitterrand, his widow, donated the broad-rimmed, black felt hat — with the customised initials "FM" inside — to the museum at Chazelles-sur-Lyon on Dec. 12, a museum official said. Forty-five kilometres from Lyon, the museum — opened in 1983 — welcomes 30,000 visitors a year who come to see its display of 350 hats that crowned the heads of such notables as Britain's Edward VII.

Strayed 'dumb' turtle found in Argentina

BUENOS AIRES (R) — A strayed Caribbean sea turtle that swam 8,000 kilometres to the river plate is now recovering from the ordeal in the Buenos Aires zoo, Argentine media said. The species, popularly known as "dumb turtle", was spotted on Thursday swimming near a hydroelectric power plant whose turbines were stopped to prevent the turtle from being killed. The 80-cm, 43-kilo turtle was recovering well after having eaten fish at the local zoo. Experts said marine streams could have swept the turtle away from its natural waters.

One in 3 Britons sees monarchy surviving

LONDON (R) — Only one in three Britons see their monarchy surviving beyond the year 2050, according to an opinion poll on the scandal-stricken royal family. The Mori poll, cited by the Sunday Times, showed that just 33 per cent believed the 1,000-year-old monarchy would keep going for more than another generation. When asked to list three things they felt the royal family contributed to British society, 23 per cent could not think of anything. Queen Elizabeth has sought to placate increasingly hostile Britons by agreeing to pay income tax and opening up Buckingham Palace to tourists to finance restoration work on the fire-ravaged Windsor Castle. But her efforts have been overwhelmed by scandals involving her children and the divorces last year of her two eldest sons, Prince Charles and Prince Andrew.